

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview
with
MARIAN BERGESON

California State Assemblywoman 1978 1984
California State Senator 1985 1994

March 31 April 24 May 23 June 21 July 5 August 9 2000
Newport Beach California

By Susan Douglass Yates
Oral History Program
University of California Los Angeles

Volume One

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None

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PREFACE

On September 25 1985 Governor George Deukmejian signed into law A B 2104 (Chapter 965 of the Statutes of 1985) This legislation established under the administration of the California State Archives a State Government Oral History Program to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history

The following interview is one of a series of oral histories undertaken for inclusion in the state program These interviews offer insights into the actual workings of both the legislative and executive processes and policy mechanisms They also offer an increased understanding of the men and women who create legislation and implement state policy Further they provide an overview of issue development in California state government and of how both the legislative and executive branches of government deal with issues and problems facing the state

Interviewees are chosen primarily on the basis of their contributions to and influence on the policy process of the state of California They include members of the legislative and executive branches of the state government as well as legislative staff advocates members of the media and other people who played significant roles in specific issue areas of major and continuing importance to California

By authorizing the California State Archives to work cooperatively with oral history units at California colleges and universities to conduct interviews this program is structured to take advantage of the resources and expertise in oral history available through California's several institutionally based programs

Participating as cooperation institutions in the State Government Oral History Program are

Oral History Program
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California State University Fullerton

Oral History Program
Center for California Studies
California State University Sacramento

Oral History Program
Claremont Graduate School

Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library
University of California Berkeley

Oral History Program
University of California Los Angeles

The establishment of the California State Archives State Government Oral History Program marks one of the most significant commitments made by any state toward the preservation and documentation of its governmental history. It supplements the often fragmentary historical written record by adding an organized primary source, enriching the historical information available on given topics and allowing for more thorough historical analysis. As such, the program, through the preservation and publication of interviews such as the one which follows, will be of lasting value to current and future generations of scholars, citizens, and leaders.

John F. Burns
State Archivist

July 27, 1988

This interview is printed on acid free paper

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer

Susan Douglass Yates

Interviewer and coordinator California State Archives State Government
Oral History Program

B A University of California Santa Cruz [History]

M A California State University Sacramento [History]

Interview Time and Place

March 31 2000

Bergeson s home in Newport Beach California
Session of one and one half hours

April 24 2000

Bergeson s home in Newport Beach California
Session of one and one half hours

May 23 2000

Bergeson's home in Newport Beach California
Session of one and three quarters hours

June 21 2000

Bergeson s home in Newport Beach California
Session of two hours

July 5 2000

Bergeson s home in Newport Beach California
Session of two hours

August 9 2000

Bergeson s home in Newport Beach California
Session of two hours

Editing

La Tonya Rease Miles editorial assistant UCLA Oral History Program checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings edited for punctuation paragraphing and spellings and with the interviewer verified proper names Insertions by the editor are bracketed Susan Douglass Yates prepared the table of contents biographical summary and interview history

Bergeson reviewed the edited transcript and returned it with only minor corrections

Interview Preparation

In preparing for the interview Yates conducted research in the California Journal Los Angeles Times Statement of Vote Assembly Final History Senate Final History and several State Government Oral History Program interviews Yates also consulted scrapbooks news clippings and general files located at Bergeson's home

Papers

Bergeson's papers are deposited at the California State Archives and are catalogued as the Assemblywoman Marian Bergeson Papers 1983 1984 and as the Senator Marian Bergeson Papers 1985 1994

Tapes and Interview Records

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives at UCLA along with the records relating to the interview Master tapes are preserved at the California State Archives

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Marian Bergeson was born on August 31 1925 in Salt Lake City She grew up and attended public schools in West Los Angeles After graduating from University High School she attended the University of California Los Angeles for several years before completing her B A in education at Brigham Young University in 1949

For several years she taught elementary school at Garfield Elementary School and John Muir Elementary School in Santa Monica and after moving to Newport Beach continued to serve as a substitute teacher Bergeson first ran for office in 1964 when she won a seat on the Newport Mesa Unified School District Board of Education She increasingly became more active in the education field serving as president of the California School Boards Association in the mid seventies

Bergeson first ran for state office in 1976 when the Seventy fourth Assembly District seat opened up She lost the election but went on to win the seat in the 1978 election In 1984 an opportunity to run for the senate occurred She won the election for the Thirty seventh Senate District becoming the first of two women Republican senators ever to be elected in California While serving in the senate Bergeson sought and won the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor in the 1990 primary election although she lost in the general election She served in the senate until 1994 when she won a seat on the Orange County Board of Supervisors From 1996 to 1998 she served as secretary of child development and education under Governor Pete Wilson She then continued her service as a public official as a member of the California State Board of Education from 1998 to 2001 playing a major role in such education reform measures as class size reduction academic content standards for each grade level and a system of assessment and accountability

In the assembly she served as vice chair of the Education Committee and in the senate she was chair of Local Government and vice chair of the Budget and Fiscal Review Committee as well as chair of the Select Committee on Planning for California's Growth She also served as minority whip during the time she was in both the assembly and the senate and chaired the Women's Caucus while she was in the senate Among her legislative accomplishments are the indexing income tax bill bills to reform the teacher credentialing process the Marian Bergeson Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) bond funds for school facilities and the one strike bill for convicted sexual predators

Bergeson continues to work on boards and foundations to support programs for children and families A school in Laguna Niguel and an aquatic center in Corona del Mar bear her name She lives with her husband Garth Bergeson in Newport Beach

[Session 1 March 31 2000]

[Begin Tape 1 Side A]

YATES Well thank you for agreeing to meet with me What I thought we could do today—we were talking about it off tape for a minute—was just get some general background information and start with you know the early life history type thing And so we really start at the beginning by asking where you were born and when

BERGESON Well I was born in Salt Lake City on August 31 1925 and I moved to California shortly after that I was still an infant when my family moved to Los Angeles and we settled early in downtown L A Of course during those years it was not the same as it is now

YATES So they moved to downtown LA Is that what you just said?

BERGESON Well they moved to Los Angeles There was really no downtown It was just Los Angeles at that time

YATES So where did they move to?

BERGESON They moved to a place that I don't recall because they bought a home shortly in Westwood and that was so that My mother [Clara Greenwood Hunter Crittenden] was very intent upon us attending a new

university which was then UCLA [University of California Los Angeles]

YATES Right

BERGESON And so we moved to Westwood where I spent all of my childhood and some of my adult life

YATES Now why did your family move from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles?

BERGESON Actually they had lived in California and my mother was visiting her relatives Her family are all from Utah and she was visiting during that time when I was born and so it was just months several months perhaps when they came back to California

YATES I see

BERGESON She was visiting her family there at the time

YATES Well how did your family then end up in California first of all?

BERGESON My family are primarily Mormon heritage They came west with the pioneers They came across In fact some of my father s family pushed handcarts across the plains So we used to hear a lot about those stories when I was a child So they were all both my parents my mother and father [Ivan H Crittenden] were born in Utah my mother in American Fork and my father in what is Hoytsville which is a suburb of Coalville [Laughter] which is in northeastern Utah They were both in ranching and farming My mother s family came from banking as well They had been involved in They owned most of the What is now

American Fork no city at that time but of course that was before it became a city And then my mother and father moved She was a teacher a school teacher and they moved to California They wanted to become more urbanized and so they moved to California

YATES So generationally explain to me then who of your family moved to Utah first of all?

BERGESON Well it would be my great grandfather on both sides Great grandparents I should say on both sides who were some of the original settlers that came across as I say the plains from the East Coast And my mother's family and my father's family were all from England and so that's where their original homes were and then they came to the United States and from there they migrated to Utah

YATES So now I missed it I think when you were saying about which family members actually came to California then?

BERGESON My mother and father both moved to California

YATES Oh Oh I see OK

BERGESON In fact most of their family Most of my mother's brothers Most of them They both came from very large families My mother's family was comprised of nine children and my father's [family] with eleven children And where my dad's family pretty much stayed in Utah my mother's family for the most part came to California

YATES I see So how did your parents meet?

BERGESON They met when my mother was school teaching and she was teaching up near where my dad lived And they met And in fact in those days she couldn't even see him It was prohibited for school teachers to even date

YATES Oh I think I heard this

BERGESON So [Laughter] it was one of those situations where they had to meet on the sly because it was just prohibited you know?

YATES And this was in Utah?

BERGESON And this was in Utah And so they got married and after they were married then they moved to California

YATES I see

BERGESON And my dad This of course was just prior to the big Depression Let's see they moved probably in the early twenties when they were first married and then No it wouldn't have been I'm trying to think Since I was born in '25 they were married in '23 or '24 I believe So they came to California then and then went back to Utah and then after I was born then they moved back to California And my dad went into a business He was in small businesses I mean he owned and operated service stations and at the time that the Depression hit then of course they were affected along with everyone else Except he was in a position of actually hiring at that time So they were not as destitute as many were and of course I never ceased hearing about the Great Depression from my parents because it was a time that they were

Well of course everyone was so dramatically impacted

YATES Do you know why they decided to come back to California? I know you talked about your mother's family was here but it sounds like there was a strong tie to Utah obviously too

BERGESON They probably just wanted a different life and I think they were looking to a different environment different kinds of opportunities and they felt that California offered that And of course California was really just very early growth very early growth And as I say when they bought their home in Westwood everyone wanted to know why they were moving way out in the 'sticks you know?

YATES Right

BERGESON And of course they were perhaps clairvoyant in what ultimately became Westwood But I remember growing up in Westwood It was completely different than what it is now

YATES Sure Well what was it like?

BERGESON Well it was just It was open fields I remember sitting on the bench waiting for a bus You used bus transportation almost entirely in those days You had one car in the family and dad took the car to work and mom you know usually didn't do anything that wasn't within walking distance or on the bus And so most of the activities that we involved ourselves around school was all on the bus Of course we used to walk to school and you know when you hear about all the safeguards that kids

have for busing and crossing streets And of course in those days if we did take the bus it was public transportation I remember very often sitting on the corner of Westwood [Boulevard] and Wilshire [Boulevard] waiting for the bus to take me home Those were just open fields and I think there was a market there

YATES And that's now one of the busiest intersections I think in Los Angeles

BERGESON Oh yeah About the only building in Westwood at that time was the Janss Building And they had Sheets ice cream I remember they used to have a place where we used to go and get the chocolate covered Oh they were so good It was cake slices Those were the sins of the day
[Laughter]

YATES Now so where did you go to elementary school?

BERGESON I went to Westwood Elementary [School] which is on Selby [Avenue] It's now a magnet school In fact I want to go back and visit That would be exciting to go back [I] went to Emerson Junior High [School] which at that time was a brand new We were the first graduating class to graduate at Emerson Junior High And then University High School

YATES And what about siblings? How many siblings did you have?

BERGESON A brother [Dr I Hunter Crittenden] My brother and I were very close in age as well as Throughout our lives we've been very close Seventeen months between the two of us And then two younger sisters [Sue Ann Crittenden Cannon and Carolyn Jean Crittenden Tyler]

YATES So are you the oldest?

BERGESON I m the oldest

YATES OK

BERGESON And then my younger sisters One was ten years younger and the other
was twelve years younger than I was

YATES Oh I see So

BERGESON So there s three girls and one boy

YATES So the two older ones were closer in age and then there s the next two

BERGESON Then they were very close in age

YATES OK Great Well let me ask you a little bit more about growing up in
West Los Angeles and I don t know if it is was called West Los
Angeles then [Laughter]

BERGESON Just Westwood

YATES Westwood And just what family life was like You said your dad was in
small business What did that mean exactly? Let me digress for a minute

BERGESON Well all I know is that he worked all the time and he wasn t home a lot
and of course when he would come home he would always bring us gum
And I remember when the sixth member was It was decided that my
mother was pregnant again and I was all concerned—because there were
only five sticks in a package of gum—quite how we were going to work
that out But he was Dad You know it was always fun when he
came home because he usually had things for the kids but it was usually

quite late. He worked late and worked long hours. Very hardworking. My mother was into a lot of volunteer activities. She would be considered an activist. I guess even in those days because women were not, you know. Most of the work was consumed around the home. You know where there was a lot of baking and canning and things that we don't. I never did but some women still do. And then on weekends we usually would get in the car and go for a ride. That was the big thing to go out in the countryside which is now where [Los Angeles] International Airport and some of those areas are. [Laughter]

YATES I was going to say where would you go?

BERGESON We used to love to go to the beach. I mean that was always a great. Because we lived fairly close to the ocean and so just to go down and you know spend time at the beach. We'd always. Our family was very close. We always did a lot of things together. We had an uncle [John G Hunter] that lived in Long Beach and I remember during the earthquake of 1933 we weren't sure what had happened to him because we were not able to communicate there was no telephone or any way of finding out. And I remember we went down and went through the rubble where his office building was and it was very traumatic. It was my first experience of course with anything as traumatic as an earthquake.

YATES And what happened with him?

BERGESON He was all right. I mean they were OK. But I remember it was pretty

tough because our cousin [Robert Hunter] wasn't able to go to school. The schools were not available for a year so he was actually out of school for a year during that time. They didn't have make up schools for kids that were

YATES There wasn't any place for him to go?

BERGESON No because all the schools were destroyed during that time. That's actually what brought about the Field Act which

YATES Oh Interesting

BERGESON We became very involved with the state legislature. But you know I think that I had great memories of my childhood. It was a very happy time even though I think that my parents always lived in a very frugal manner. It was more a question of lifestyle rather than requirement. It was their. My mother always said. It isn't what you have. It's what you are and what you do. And I think that's pretty much a philosophy that I subscribe to as well. I feel it's very important to show what you can do. And I know she worked very very diligently at public service types of things.

YATES Well tell me a little bit more about the types of activities your mom was involved in

BERGESON Well a lot of it was church. They were very very involved with the Mormon church. And of course they had a welfare program which they still do where they would provide for people. And I know that during the

Depression and that that she was always doing things You know special food projects and going out and helping people that had problems She was always very much involved with what they call the welfare program

And then she also was involved in the schools I remember if ever there was a problem she was down there You know she always took our side One time it was probably one of my more dramatic experiences I guess I was chatting I was a very shy child Very extremely shy And so it was unusual for me to be talking to somebody But I was talking to somebody behind me or something and so the teacher sent me into the cloak room She forgot about me and she left me there and of course this was when they had It was like a paint room actually And the door was closed And I was in this closed closet and she didn't realize it until she got ready to go home and I was just sitting there You know I didn't know what to do I was you know I was terrified So I went home and told my mother And my mother being a teacher so I mean She went down to the principal's office and she was furious So I never had such good treatment from there on [Laughter]

YATES [Laughter] Although that's a pretty traumatic thing to have happen

BERGESON It was It was frightening It was really frightening for me I'll never forget it You know looking through that I can still see the slits you know at the bottom of the door where the light was coming through But here sitting in that black closet with the paint no less

YATES What grade were you in?

BERGESON I was in the third grade Mrs [] Boxmeyer s class I ll never forget her [Laughter]

YATES I was going to say [Laughter] That doesn t sound like something you would easily forget

BERGESON No It was very traumatic

YATES Well you mentioned the Great Depression also And what do you remember about that in terms of impacting your family personally?

BERGESON Well it you know as I say Because we had My dad worked I mean he had a job He was hiring other people So we were probably some of those that were not as dramatically impacted But I remember people coming around begging for food you know? A lot of people would come to the door and ask for sandwiches Mom would always fix them a sandwich you know? Give them a glass of ice water She never would invite them in the home because she was always a little nervous about inviting strangers in but she would always put up a table and chair out in the backyard and feed people that would come around And I remember seeing the lines of people that were You know to get food during the Which was kind of frightening to me I just couldn t imagine that people would be that poor And of course you know there were many many many people who had had a good deal before that who lost everything But it wasn t so much how it affected my family as how I

view it affecting a lot of others because of the closeness that they were to our family. You know, in fact, I had one of my—I guess it would have been an in-law—my mother's sister's husband [Elmer Jensen] came out and worked for my dad for a while.

YATES: You talked a little bit about elementary school and once you got into junior high school or high school, did you have any particular leanings or things that you were particularly interested in, in terms of subject matters? Or matter. I should say.

BERGESON: I always liked to organize. I would organize the neighborhood plays and get kids together. It was always fun for me to do things that were somewhat different, building stages in the backyard and using the garage to have all of our little plays and skits and things that we did. But I was never particularly drawn to anything particularly in school. I remember most of my fun times were actually out of school, what we were doing. Of course, we had long summers and we would do things. We didn't have the types of activities where you would go down to the Boy's Club or the Girl's Club or the city recreation programs. We did most of our own. And we would always take that summer trip back to Utah in a car without air conditioning, and I remember how miserable those trips were and how I hated them. It was always fun when we got there but I hated those trips. And it was truly, you know, 'Are we there yet?' about every five miles.
[Laughter]

YATES And it probably took you a little while to get there

BERGESON Yeah yeah But as far as activities during school I was not that involved in school activities I enjoyed school I went all the way through elementary school and never missed a day I had perfect attendance all through elementary but I was lucky You know I didn't have a lot of the childhood illnesses in that most of them I'd had before I started school And we didn't have immunizations for a lot of things that they do now

YATES Right

BERGESON But one of the I guess My kids are very excellent swimmers and the reason is I never learned how to swim In fact I have an aquatic center named after me [Marian Bergeson Aquatic Center] And I'm probably the only one in the world who has an aquatic center without knowing how to swim

YATES I'm surprised since you lived near the beach

BERGESON Yeah but that's the reason Because you never really learn to swim in the ocean And it's a different type I know the first time I got in a fresh water lake we went to Arrowhead My uncle had a place at Arrowhead And that's another thing Every summer we would go up and spend time at Lake Arrowhead And I was terrified of the water because I thought you'd have the same buoyancy you do in the ocean And went down And I'd had a bad experience in the ocean One time I got caught in a rip tide and it was very frightening

YATES Yeah that can be very terrifying

BERGESON And it stayed with me But the other reason was that we didn't have the neighborhood pools but—and it got around to childhood diseases—we had the threat of polio and the polio emanated oftentimes from what they call plunges and so my mother would never let us go to the public plunges during the summer So that was another reason why I never learned how to swim because whatever we did in the ocean was just not quite the same as what you do in learning how to swim in the fresh water swimming pool But again I think the experiences that I remember most in junior high or like at Christmastime and of course which they don't do now But I mean we had The candles would be put in the door At Christmas I was in the Glee Club and we would go around and sing Christmas carols It was a two story school which is not They don't have those because of the steps and so forth but I remember how exciting that was when you know Those are the things that I get

YATES That you remember?

BERGESON Really traumatized Yeah after Christmas time And I still remember the auditorium and on one side you had Abraham Lincoln and on the other side George Washington's picture And I can still see that [Laughter] I've wanted to go back and see if it's still there And then at Emerson I think junior high was probably the most trying time for me I didn't particularly like the teachers I had I mean I was never particularly

inspired by any of them I remember our homeroom teacher used to sit and do her nails all the time And the odor was just I d sit in back of her I was sitting right near her desk And I don t know it was kind of a turn off time for me as far as really getting involved and interested in school

YATES That s too bad

BERGESON I never got involved with any of the activities In high school I did some but not to the extent where I was really involved in a lot of them I had a couple of club activities and that But I never really felt that I was one of the big men or big women on campus And it never really particularly interested me I mean I was a good enough student but not a real good student And I was really not that involved in student activities

YATES How big was your high school? Do you remember how many students?

BERGESON Oh yes It was huge We had I graduated in the summer of 43 and there were 500 in that class And then there were 500 in the winter class So there were over 1 000 students

YATES That s large

BERGESON Yeah And so I mean it was It was a huge high school I had my own circle of friends you know? We had a lot of fun But I dated fellows from other high schools And I think probably one of the I would say probably the saddest situation for those of us at that time was the war [World War II] because in 1941 I was in high school I had just started

high school and of course in '42 most of the fellows went ahead and graduated because they wanted to enlist and because they would take them at seventeen. And so as soon as any of them were seventeen they would either graduate early or you know. And so it was very disruptive and we didn't even have high school annuals. Interesting note. I had a call not long ago from an archive because Marilyn Monroe was Norma Jean Baker. She was in some of our yearbooks. But we didn't have yearbooks because we couldn't use the paper. So we actually lost. The senior year was very irrelevant when it came to what you consider to be high school activities. There were no proms. There were no. Our graduation and everything had to be in the afternoon because of coastal black outs and during that time you rarely could have any kind of outside activities. No gasoline. So I mean it was just not like. I mean it stands out because of the emotion. You would date fellows and they'd be on leave and you'd hear that they would be killed in action a couple of weeks later. And so there was that awful sensitivity to what was going on. Being part of that and all the sacrifices that people were going through. You know the awful looking stockings because nobody had nylons. You got the shoe coupons. And it was then during the summer when I. I used to always work during the summertime when I was old enough to and I worked at the bank which is the Janss Building there. Bank of America.

YATES What did you do?

BERGESON I was a teller. Well, first I was a NCR operator, which used to sort the checks, which meant that you had to manually sort them into all of these little boxes. And then, of course, I wanted to be the best NCR operator in the world and so I became very fast and, you know, very good at it. I became so good that they allowed me to become a teller. So then I was a bank teller there in Westwood. It was kind of fun because you got to see a lot of the movie stars who had their accounts there. So that was kind of an exciting time.

I did that right after I graduated from high school with the idea that I would try to get enough money ahead so that I could go away to college and then do a lot of the things that, you know, I was waiting to do. My mother always knew I was going to go to college. I mean, I was always prepared. It was more my mother. My father was. He kind of let my mother do most of the. The motivational activities primarily were stimulated through my mother. And she always knew that I was going to go to college and I always thought, no, I won't do that. I'm going to get married, you know? So when I graduated from college it was because I was a failure because I was never able to find someone that at that time, you know, that I could feel that I wanted to get married to. I always went out a lot. I had a lot of dates but I just didn't have that feeling that I wanted to marry anyone that I was going with, except for a fellow who. And this is where I

Well it's kind of interesting in how a lot of my college activities came about because I was working in the bank and then when it was time for me to go to college of course I wanted to go to UCLA as I had always been programmed. And Mom thought well why don't you try the BYU [Brigham Young University]? So they sent me back to BYU and I wasn't happy at all. I remember some of the women that I was. Well they weren't women they were girls at that time. Roommates. When they got a call their fiance or somebody had been killed in action.

YATES This was a hard time

BERGESON These are the things that I remember during that time. There was such tragedy and so much sadness. I lost a cousin [Werner Floyd] that I was very fond of. In fact they never found his remains. He bailed out of an airplane. He was a pilot. But when I came back from BYU. So my mother said Well OK. We'll go to UCLA. So I went to UCLA for let's see from 40

YATES I was going to ask you the time sequence

BERGESON Forty five 46 47 And I pledged Gamma Phi Beta. It was a sorority there. And really enjoyed it. I had a great time. And I was going with a fellow [John Malloy] that I was very fond of and he was a Catholic which was of course. My parents were very devout Mormons and this was very troubling to them. And I was a little bit belligerent during those days anyway and I you know. And my brother went to UCLA and we had a

great time. He was a Fij1 [Phi Gamma Delta] and so the fellow that I was going with was a Fij1 which was a fraternity there. So we used to go to a lot of the parties and so forth. And then he was preparing to go to medical school and so he decided that perhaps he would go back to the University of Utah feeling that it might be easier to get into the University of Utah med[ical] school if he we went there because they had an excellent program. And my family had a lot of contacts there feeling it would be better. And so then when Well my mother said You can go to UCLA if you want to but we re not going to pay your tuition. Now if you want to go to the BYU we ll pay your tuition. So with that of course I went back to BYU and there I stayed until I graduated. I graduated in education. And my brother he went and surprisingly he came back and went to USC [University of Southern California] medical school. So it worked both ways. I mean he came back to UCLA for his residency as well.

YATES Well now explain to me then. You said you worked for a while after high school and you were trying to save money to go to UCLA and this is because your parents were going to help you financially if you went to BYU but not UCLA.

BERGESON Well it was a combination of funds. I mean they were paying. Of course living expenses you know were not as heavy as they are now but it was still. And it was sort of thought everybody worked when they

went to school. It was not like it is now, it was pretty intense. UCLA had some pretty tough courses. In fact, I had a rude awakening. I started out in business and I had no business going into business because I didn't really understand a lot of the basics. You know, economics and some courses that I frankly had not been that well prepared for.

YATES: So you went now. I'm sorry you went to UCLA first for a little bit and then went to

BERGESON: I went to BYU first and then I went to UCLA. Yeah, I was on the six year plan. [Laughter] And then I came back to. I graduated from BYU and then I taught. I married. My husband [Garth Bergeson] and I, we met at the BYU and so I waited for him to complete his education and I taught during that time. And then after that, we moved to California. We came down here. But he was from Utah.

YATES: OK. Well, let me backtrack again then for a second. Then the young man who was the Catholic eventually was out of the picture. Is that

BERGESON: In fact, he died of alcoholism. So probably my parents were probably more clairvoyant than I thought they were. [Laughter]

YATES: Well, hopefully it had nothing to do with religion.

BERGESON: No, No, No. This was some years later.

YATES: Well, let me ask you a little bit more about your parents because you've mentioned some of the dynamics up until that point and a little bit more about your mother, but tell me in terms of who you see as the really strong

influences in your life. How, you know, do you perceive them or anybody else that had a big impact on you?

BERGESON: Well, without question from my mother. I mean, she was very strong-willed, a very independent person. But I mean, if ever I had a problem, I could go and talk to her and I would feel OK about it. And oftentimes, boyfriends, this sort of thing that every girl goes through during adolescence. And she just had a way of making things right. At the same time, she, you know, I think, gave me the confidence because as I said, I was extremely shy. When I was in kindergarten, the teacher, My mother went down there to find out how I was doing and they said, "Well, we don't know. She hasn't spoken yet." And so she went down and talked to the teachers, you know?

I'll never forget my first grade teacher, which I think saved my life and probably an influence there. She also taught me phonics that I've never forgotten and that's what made me a strong proponent when I actually taught myself. But anyway, she gave me assignments. I was the buzzer monitor. That was the communication level. When you hear the buzzer, you go to the office and find out what they wanted. And so she put me in charge of the buzzer. I was a good reader. She had me go in and read to other classes. And so she gave me opportunities to really gain more confidence and be more outgoing and, of course, my mother was very much. I mean, she always let all of us feel—all of our kids, my

brother and sisters—that there wasn't anything that we couldn't do you know if we set our minds to it. She was very inspiring in what she had been able to do in her life and she'd always use this you know. She didn't put herself up as an example except that she served as an example and as did her family. She came from a very very strong family. Very successful family. And yet it was never material wealth that was of major concern to her. It was you know what you do with your life and how you serve other people and how you feel about what you've done. That you have to be accountable for what you do and if you do wrong. She wasn't as I say. She was rather restrictive when it came to what school I was going to go to but you know she did give me a choice. She said "You know if it is a question we feel so strongly about it. It's so important to us. And she came from as I say very sturdy stock because they. From a religious perspective. In fact it was her great grandfather I believe that joined the Mormon church and his family cut them off. We went back to see them. We traced the family just last year with my brother and sisters.

YATES They cut him off when he became a Mormon?

BERGESON When he became a Mormon. And they wouldn't recognize him as part of the family at all. And so then he came over here and yet he was a very successful person. He was able to do very well. But I think there was that strength of you know you've got good stock. It was always you

remember who you are. It was always that feeling that you know there's something that you could do if you're willing to do what it takes. Very strong on the work ethic.

And I remember one time I went up and we had a Van de Kamp's store which was up on the corner of Pico [Boulevard] and Pelham [Avenue]. And Pelham was the street that we—2326 Pelham. And I remember I dropped a dime in the dust when I was coming home and she sent me back there to find that dime. I remember that I never did find it but I mean it was just that everything has to—You don't slip up, you know? You have to be accountable. If you slip up, you've got to make it right somehow. And yet she was not particularly demonstrative, you know? I think her English heritage was—She was typically—But she was very caring. I mean, in fact, when she got older she was ill. Unfortunately, she died much too young. But when she was younger, when we had our kids—her grandkids—she would take all of the grandkids and take care of them. Not tell us that the other grandkids were there because we were afraid that it might impose on her. But I mean, she was very sacrificing when it came to doing for other people and, you know, making personal commitments that were just incredibly self-sacrificing.

YATES: What were your ties like with your grandparents?

BERGESON: We never had grandparents that were accessible except that—Well, my

brother and I we used to go visit our grandparents [Herbert and Jemima Crittenden] in Utah that had a big ranch because they had horses and of course we loved horses I was always an animal lover and we could go up there and they would have You know we would go and play in the hayloft and do things the city kids never had a chance to do And that was my dad's family primarily because my mother's family were considerably older and they died both of them died when we were very very young But my dad's grandparents we got to know fairly well but it was always during our vacations when we'd go up there in the summertime My brother and I would have great time doing things

YATES Well you mentioned you know ties to the Mormon church and a little bit about where you ended up going to college and some of those issues but I don't know if you could describe any more about the day to day role that played in your life and what that was like in terms of your friends that you met or going to school or anything like that

BERGESON Oh you mean the religious background?

YATES Yeah Or how much did it—I'm not wording this very well—how much of it was part of your day to day life?

BERGESON Well I think I had many friends that Probably more friends that were not people that I had grown to know through the church However much of what we did I think was instilled in us the strong element of family you know the closeness the tradition of really Strong family ties

That was very much a part and still is I mean it's very much a part of our tradition and you know the closeness that I think that we feel and the responsibility for the family which I think is something that is That's always there I mean even though our family doesn't always live right near us You know we always know they're there and that they will be there for anything that comes along

But I went to church and I you know would go to church and sometimes I was kind of a renegade when I resented some of the things that my mother used to want me to You know 'It would be nice for you to go to this And I wasn't always Because I think the element I found discrimination against the Mormon church when I was very young Some of my good friends they used to make fun of me all the time And I didn't quite understand They'd go up and they would say 'You have horns or something?' You know I wasn't familiar with some of the things the perceptions that people had And I know that bothered me a little and I was a little embarrassed by it I know I talked to my mother and she'd just say Well they don't know anything Don't pay any attention to them But I know those things they did tend to bother me initially because I was as I said I was very sensitive and obviously when people make remarks kids are prone to misunderstand or not really understand what all this is about

But I think the underlying philosophy of how I was brought up

which was very much dependent upon the very strong faith that my parents had. And I think sometimes converts are much stronger in what they believe in than people who have always had it there. You sort of take it for granted. So I think I sort of took a lot of it for granted as far as you know knowing that I should go to church and I should do these things. And that I think the influence that. Much of what came from the philosophy I think is very much with me very much a part of me. I think you know when you're brought up in that particular environment I think it stays with you.

A lot of my activities were. Again I sort of had my church friends and then I had my school friends and they both meant a great deal to me and sometimes they were both. I mean many times I know even when I was in the sorority there were several that you know I had known throughout my life as church friends as well. And it's still the same way I have friends that I have known parent's friends that we still identify very closely with that are very close because of church relationships and then many of course that are not. I met my husband who happened to be a member of the church the Mormon church as well. And with my own kids they've gone in every which way—some that are very close and some that have absolutely nothing to do with it. So you know it's that. The same thing with my brother and I. We probably were not quite as strong as my two younger sisters. And you know still I think there was. It

wasn't a question that we were anti. It's just a question of commitment and the time that was expended. But I think the influence was always very much there.

YATES Well, you mentioned that the expectation—at least on your mother's side of things—was that you were going to go to college. But at the same time you talked about not really, it sounds like, being really engaged in school—correct me, if I am mis[representing] it—in that there hadn't been any teachers or subject that had drawn you, and I'm just wondering what you were thinking at the time or why did you want to go to college?

BERGESON I'm not sure I really did. I think that there was, you know, Time and place is everything and at that time it was during the war. There was very little interest. You know, that's the time when you date, you have fun, and of course, the dating and fun didn't exist during that time. I mean, you went out. The dating did [exist] but there were usually people that were in the service and had little relationship to school at that point. Or if they were in officer school. Because I did date some that were, in fact, After the war at UCLA, a lot of the social life then was with the returning veterans who were back [due to] the GI Bill and, you know, were going to school. My husband was on the GI [Bill]. He was a B-29 pilot during the war. But I mean, because of that association, there was no real motivation. There were not that many opportunities for women and I. You know, sometimes I think [I thought], Why do I need to go to college? I can

always be a secretary until I get married You know which was kind of the feeling My mother always wanted to be an attorney

YATES Oh really?

BERGESON And so I think she kind of transferred that and she was always upset because it was unusual even for her generation to have women that were educated She had always felt And she probably would have been a very good attorney you know? My daughter [Nancy Bergeson] acts very much the same way great at arguing I said Now if you could just intellectualize that arguing you would do great ' But my mother was I think she was very ambitious for us and I'm not sure that I recognized my responsibility in that at that time Because I remember talking to my uncle [William E Hunter] who was a doctor and he would say Well you don't need to go to college And I thought 'Here is somebody I have great respect for He said You know you can get a good job in the bank " He said You know you can move up and do all kinds of things from the bank And I thought "Well you know maybe that's true " My mother always wanted me to be a musician too and I was tone deaf [Laughter]

YATES But you said you sang in the glee club

BERGESON Yeah I did I don't think I was highly successful I never It was not [because of] my audition [Laughter] Strictly volunteer But no it's I'm not sure that I was that highly motivated at that time I think it was

just the time and the place I'm not sure I couldn't even define what success was because you couldn't see you didn't know you know? I mean it was a very difficult time for kids of my age And I look now We had our fiftieth high school reunion—fifty fifth for that matter—and you know I looked around the room and so few of them ever really went on to college I mean it was a time when it was just kind of a gap you know because of the circumstances and where there were some In fact Bob Gray was one of them who happens to be the St John's Knits He's one of those obviously He married well [Laughter]

But it was just I think a very unusual period of history and probably a time that you would not want your children to have to be subjected to just because of the things that were going on I mean I remember that during the time you would see the newsreels We would go to the Saturday That was a big thing For a dime you could go to the Saturday afternoon matinee and you could see two movies and a serial Buck Rogers And you could find the movie You know then they had the serial that they would have on the I remember the terrible things that you'd see and it was hard for me to fathom the awful things that were happening And of course if you'd see a dead body that was a terrible thing Now of course the things that you can see and view you know? I think maybe people have become too desensitized to what the horrors of some of these things really are

YATES Right because you're exposed to it all the time

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Well now why did you want to go to UCLA over going to BYU?

BERGESON Because of the fellows I was going out with at that time

YATES OK

BERGESON And that I had started dating. And these were fellows that had been in the service and they were coming back and one was the fellow that I had gone with for so long. It was in high school during. He went to Beverly [Hills] High [School] and I went to Uni High and so we used to date a lot in high school before the war. And then of course he went—actually I was a little older than he was—and he went into the navy and then he came back and went to UCLA.

YATES I see

BERGESON And then some of the friends. In fact we sort of had. Between UCLA and 'SC [University of Southern California] we used to say the smart kids go to UCLA and the rich kids that couldn't get into UCLA go to SC. I think that may still be the case. But anyway. So we were very much involved with some of the sorority and fraternity life at that time and as I say there's kind of a crosstown rivalry between SC and UCLA and a lot of the girls that I knew then both went to UCLA or SC and very few of them actually went to the high school that I went to. They were more friends that I had known you know through other kinds of

relationships and actually some of them came out of the church relationship There were people that I had known and [I] got to know others You know how you sort of get started in a group and then you just continue to meet new people? And I liked that It was kind of an exciting time and I kind of enjoyed that and maybe I enjoyed it too much because that's why my parents thought maybe I should

YATES Should go to BYU?

BERGESON Should get in a different environment yeah [Laughter]

[End Tape 1 Side A]

[Begin Tape 1 Side B]

YATES Now you mentioned studying business at UCLA and then you graduated from BYU in education So what happened? How did you

BERGESON Well actually I had several majors [Laughter] Since my mother had been a teacher I wasn't sure I wanted to be a teacher You know how there's always that feeling that I want to do something different You know something really different And I thought at first well the business world might be a good place to be And then I found that I was the only woman in many of the business classes and I found it very competitive And so I thought well maybe I'll try music just because my mother had always wanted Well that didn't work at all That was a big mistake So then I think from there I did move into education I decided that I really did think it would be a great Kind of like an insurance policy

That's the way women looked upon it. You know, if anything happens to my husband then I have something I can do. But it was never really considered that women were going to be the breadwinners. You know, it was just not the thing. You were a social worker, you were a teacher, you were a secretary. And there were very limited roles for women and particularly in the professions in that you rarely saw them. Then particularly since the fellows were coming back. Because everybody owed them a job, you know, and all of the privileges were given to fellows who had done their service for the country. Women were supposed to be there to give them that assist and make sure that they had all of the opportunities. So it was different as far as the motivations that you would have for things other than what you would consider traditional women's jobs and careers.

YATES: Well, how did you meet your husband?

BERGESON: Back at the BYU. In fact, he was studying business and we had a blind date and then neither one of us liked each other very much. [Laughter]

YATES: But that changed. [Laughter]

BERGESON: He sort of worked out, yeah.

YATES: And he was there. He returned from being in World War II.

BERGESON: Yeah, yeah. He was a student—what do you call it?—anyway, he had been there. I think on the GI Bill.

YATES: OK. Had he been at BYU?

BERGESON No He had been at the University of Utah and then he went into the service He was very very athletic and had been involved in a lot of athletic activities as well And then I actually met him through He was on the baseball team as the star pitcher and I met him through some of the friends who introduced me to him because I had seen him I thought he was you know a nice looking guy And so that's really the way it started About two years I think we had known each other and dated and then we finally got married

YATES And so what year did you get married?

BERGESON Nineteen fifty

YATES OK And you graduated from college in

BERGESON In 1949

YATES Oh OK Let me ask you—I'm going to backtrack here again a little bit since eventually our discussion will focus on your political career—and I'm wondering at least up until that point what interest you had in politics if any? Well I'll start with that

BERGESON Well my political interests really did not surface until I moved to Newport Beach

YATES OK

BERGESON After I came back after Garth and I moved back to California I mean after BYU we lived in Brentwood and then moved to Westwood and it was Los Angeles was not an easy place to get into activities Our kids [Nancy

Bergeson and David Garth Bergeson] were in They went to Bellagio School at that time And it was a good school And I was doing I had gone back to teach and I was teaching in Santa Monica and it was I was active You know when I was a teacher I was involved in fact in the union activities and things of that I think I was hospitality chairman or something [Laughter] You know things that related to what I was doing in education And [I] had been attending UCLA for seminars and so forth and I had actually thought of going back to UCLA and getting my master s [degree] so I had taken some courses But it was just a time commitment because at that time I had two young children—Nancy and David—they were both in school at that time And then I found out I was pregnant about the same time that Garth was transferred down to Well he took a job down here to go with a new company which was Ford Aeroneutronic He had been with McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach and then he moved down here And of course I was pregnant and so In fact we built this house This is the same house we ve lived in since 1958 when we moved down here And I was pregnant with Julie [Bergeson McCormick] and when we moved here then I suddenly took an interest in what was going on in the community The kids went to a school which was Mariners [Elementary] School which is down the street They didn't have a library and we had to take the kids all the way down to the peninsula because I was very much involved with their education I made sure that they had access

to recreation and libraries and so forth. And so I became involved in getting a library built by the school here.

YATES: So that's what you think you see as the pivotal

BERGESON: So that's where it sort of started and also with PTA [Parent Teachers Association]. I started with a... I was a chairman of a bond election.

YATES: Oh, I see.

BERGESON: And that got me involved with the school people and then a woman [Margaret P. 'Peggy' Landers] who sat on the school board who was—this was Newport Beach Elementary [School District Board of Education]. Prior to that... This was 1964. She said, "You really should think about serving on the school board." And I thought, "you know, running for..." I can't remember what age I was. This was 64. So I, you know, wasn't really young but I mean, I really hadn't thought of elected office at that point. I mean, it just never really entered my mind and

YATES: Yeah, go ahead. I'm sorry.

BERGESON: So she said, "Well, you really should think about it because you know, I think you've got the background, the understanding." By then I think I was on five different boards in communities. We started the Children's Theater Guild, which is a group then that provided for drama and other plans. In fact, I was on the stage for a while myself. I did a little song and dance.

YATES It sounds like you like theater [Laughter]

BERGESON And I love the theater I really like it I love the excitement of the organization of what goes on And I was always kind of a ham I think anybody in teaching has to be a ham if you're going to communicate with kids

But anyway with that I was convinced to run for the Newport Beach City [School District Board of Education] And it was at the time that they were just considering unification and I opposed unification because I just thought we don't want a great big district and Newport at that time was looking at expanding down county They were looking at all this being within the same district which of course has changed substantially And thinking that would be too much too many kids for a school district But actually I ran for the Newport Mesa [Unified School District] Board [of Education]—even being an opponent of it But that was probably my most exciting election because I won that election in the last precinct and it was by sixty nine votes

YATES Wow Close

BERGESON And it was probably you know the most exciting to win because I thought I'd lost I kept thinking Gosh there's no way I can make this up But then being on the new board gave me tremendous opportunities because we had a wealthy district I mean rich in resources and people and a lot of community commitment and so we really developed I think

a lighthouse district We got the best superintendent we could find and you know it was a traumatic time because any time you change You know the administrative changes the morale problems and everything but I think it was that involvement that got me more involved I was at the state level I was president of the [California] School Boards Association and that brought me into contact with the legislature

YATES I see So that's sort of where

BERGESON That's really where

YATES But I don't want to jump too far ahead but I was just wondering if up until you know the point that you finished college what if any interest you had

BERGESON No While I was at UCLA in the sorority I did become somewhat involved in Oh what was it? It was a group but it was kind of subversive I found out later [Laughter] I did register to be a Republican when I was twenty one and I've always been a Republican There were a lot of liberal causes going on there always have been at the universities And there was a cause And I sort of you know I liked to get into programs that were doing things for people who couldn't take care of themselves as well Poor folks you know? The underprivileged

YATES How about in your family? Did you talk politics or about events or

BERGESON Yes My dad was a dyed in the wool [Franklin D] Roosevelt Democrat and every night we listened He was a news junkie which I think I

inherited But he had to listen to everything and we would talk politics
 My mother was a dyed in the wool [William H] Taft Republican They
 canceled each other's vote out every election I mean the family
 discussions which were healthy because I used to enjoy listening to them
 talk So yeah there was that aspect that was more just you know kind of
 with intrigue

YATES What types of things would they talk about?

BERGESON Well a lot of it of course Following the war Policies My dad
 was into it a lot He just thought Roosevelt was you know the most
 magnificent person that ever lived because of what he saw pull[ing] the
 country out What they did

YATES During the Depression

BERGESON Post Depression And of course my mother was always you know
 You can't have these government programs And much more
 conservative And how you know These government programs are
 going to kill us down the road And both of what they said came true
 [Laughter] But I mean everything is timing It was right for the time
 And I think Roosevelt was an outstanding president I knew his son quite
 well

YATES James Roosevelt?

BERGESON And then Mary [Roosevelt] is one of my closest friends She does a lot in
 education But I you know It was interesting in getting the

perspective but it also I think built in a kind of resistance to the radio because I could never listen to The Green Hornet or Bill Mack and Jimmy or whatever it was because they always had Gabriel Heater or someone on who was the commentator of the day and his political persuasive arguments

YATES Well you mentioned that you registered Republican and have always been a Republican but you had a family with each parent

BERGESON Right

YATES Different party So what do you see as the influences there? Or no influences or

BERGESON Well you know one of the things that I found at UCLA which always intrigued me was there were two discussions that would always stimulate the greatest degree of emotion politics and religion And I remember we would get in these arguments and get into them in the sorority whether it was on campus [or not] you know Lunch time we would always I always enjoyed the discussion And I'd get somewhat intense probably more intense than I should have in many situations I think basically it was more a distrust of government Just government per se Because I always felt that government tends And it was a concept I had and maybe I've never really lost it but it's an impersonal You know it's not You don't feel about government I mean my goal has always been to make government user friendly because I think it can

Government serves a very useful purpose as long as people understand and utilize it you know in a positive way But I think it was more just a basic understanding of a more conservative element—self sufficiency more of Government shouldn't be helping you you should be able to do for yourself And of course I was brought up too where the church takes care of welfare So welfare to me was a responsibility of the people who can deal effectively on a personal level and expect something for it You know I felt you definitely needed to have some degree of responsibility that goes with whatever you are given or what you have to get

YATES Well it's just interesting to hear I mean it always makes for I think a fascinating discussion when you've got two parents who are of maybe differing political views and you hear probably more It's almost better than having them agree because you hear more of the different

BERGESON No there are a lot more discussions And there was always We always had family dinner discussions I mean everybody sat down at the table I wish I could have raised my children [that way] as well But I mean it was different too because mom was fixing dinner you know? I mean dinner was ready when you were home and of course I've never been that good at having dinner ready

YATES Well times have changed a little bit too [Laughter]

BERGESON A lot

YATES Well just to go back now You finished college in '49 and you said

you married in 1950 Now I should backtrack here again a little bit

Now where was your husband from originally?

BERGESON He was from Utah he was from northern Utah And his family were ranchers and farmers And in fact his family had actually been much more involved His dad was the county commissioner which is like a county board of supervisors and they had They were very active within the agricultural associations One of his uncles had been Goodness what was he? Anyway not a congressman but he had It was an elected office a statewide office some kind of representative No different than what we do in California

YATES So what were your plans then? You got married

BERGESON Well we were Garth had graduated in business and so he wanted to get into some form of business that was related to his He loved airplanes and he had his own airplane for a while

YATES Right you said he flew during World War II

BERGESON Yeah and so he wanted to become involved in something that had So he went to aircraft and he started working at McDonnell Douglas and he stayed there for a number of years And so when that pretty much I mean I was you know going to be the wife I guess forever You know it wasn't necessarily a feeling that I had that I wanted a career because again the timing wasn't such that you did I remember we'd go down and sit down on the Balboa Bay Club sands This was to me the height of hypocrisy I

would put an onion in the Crock Pot when I'd leave in the morning so that he'd think that I'd have dinner ready when I got home. But I mean we'd sit on the beach all day and the kids would be sailing and we'd you know give the excuse that they were taking sailing lessons. But it sort of got to me after awhile and I thought You know I just don't really feel that I It wasn't that I And I didn't like to play bridge I still do sometimes just for the sociability but a lot of the women I knew you know had the bridge clubs. And I thought I just I really need to So that's when I got into a lot more volunteer work. We did the work with the schools. And I think at one time I was on like eight boards volunteer groups and involved then with I did some substitute teaching thinking that I wanted to keep kind of my finger on the pulse of education because I kind of had that you know always in the back of my mind that maybe someday I'd go back and teach full time. So that's when I was

YATES So I'm sorry So your husband got a job right away out here? Is that

BERGESON Yeah In fact he had the job before he came down as an employee

YATES OK So you moved out here in 1950 Is that

BERGESON We stayed out there for a while because I think he wanted to determine whether he wanted to go into ranching or not. His family had done very well

YATES You stayed in Utah?

BERGESON Uh huh In the sheep business and also in dairy farming and so forth

And frankly that was not for me I just didn't think that was the lifestyle that I wanted So finally you know I think he probably agreed He would prefer leaving too because I didn't want to have him do something that he didn't feel comfortable in doing So then at the point we moved down here

YATES OK And what year was that?

BERGESON That was in '50 maybe '51 Because Nancy was Or was it '52? I was pregnant with Garth when we moved and he was born in '53 So it was the end of '52

YATES OK How many children do you have?

BERGESON Four

YATES Four OK And so just for sake of also thinking about timing what years did you have your children?

BERGESON Well Nancy was born in '51 Garth was born in '53

YATES OK

BERGESON Julie was born in '59 and James [Hunter Bergeson] was born in '61

YATES So when you came out here you already had one

BERGESON We had two We had two children when we moved here And they had kindergarten first grade I believe in Brentwood in Westwood And then the other two were born when we moved down here

YATES OK

BERGESON They were both born at St. Jude's Hospital

YATES Well tell me some more You said you started to get into substitute teaching? Is that what you started to do?

BERGESON Yes I did some substitute teaching And then when I ran for the Board of Education though then I didn't think feel it was appropriate for me to be teaching So I didn't do anymore substituting after that

YATES And what year was that that you ran for the school board?

BERGESON Nineteen sixty four

YATES So this is the Newport Beach

BERGESON This was the Newport Beach Elementary

YATES City School District Board of Education? Is that the right title?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES OK And you were talking a little bit about how that came about but maybe you can describe some more detail of the events that led to that

BERGESON Well I had worked I had chaired a school bond election which failed [Laughter] which was devastating because I couldn't believe that people in Newport wouldn't support bonds school bonds But it did bring me into the environment a lot of folks involved with education and including the superintendents There were a couple then We had the Newport Harbor Union High School District and we had the Costa Mesa [Union School District Board of Education] and the Newport Elementary And of course there was talk of the unification at that time And there was a bill in fact in the legislature that required that you had to unify There

were districts that [are] required [to] which many of them haven't yet but that was kind of the hammer that was hanging over And so they had the unification election and it passed by Costa Mesa Costa Mesa having more voters than Newport Beach So the unification election was successful I opposed unification being from Newport Beach In fact there were two of us Donald [A] Strauss and myself who were on the Newport Beach Elementary board who were both elected then to the Newport Mesa board and at that time it was unusual for women to be on boards However there were two women elected one from Newport and myself [Elizabeth M] Betty Lilly was the woman from Costa Mesa We were elected to the Newport Mesa Unified School District Board of Education Peggy Landers who was kind of my mentor was on the Newport Beach Elementary [Board] but she was retiring and she didn't want to run and so she's the one that convinced me that it would be a good idea for me to run

YATES How did she convince you?

BERGESON She was a dynamo She was a real role model She just is I mean she could take these guys who were from here and here you know all over the place and she could bring the meeting into a consensus by just She just had a way about her Wonderful personality She was about four foot ten and just a little bundle of energy Great sense of humor and a wonderful person I got to know her and I just thought she was someone that really motivated me in a way that I could see a role you know that

could be played by a woman on the board because frankly you kind of had to carve out your niche because it just wasn't common to have women involved particularly in elective office at that point. In fact it's funny. One of the remarks that had an impact on me and I'm sure it wasn't meant the way it was but this was a little bit later when I was with the California School Boards Association with the political aspects. A fellow that I got to know when I was either vice president or the president—I can't remember—but he was an attorney, a very successful attorney from San Francisco. I had great admiration for his ability. I thought people of his stature, you know, having involvement in education. It was great. And so I was talking to him one time. We spent, oh, I don't know, an afternoon or something just discussing. He said, 'You know, have you ever thought of going into politics?' I kind of laughed and I looked at him and he said, 'Well, you know, you think just like a man.' Of course I took it as a great compliment. You know, that this was the ultimate that I could actually qualify in a man's world. And I thought often what I should say now is, 'You know, have you ever thought of becoming president?' You think just like a woman. [Laughter] But that was—you know, getting it into perspective—that was the greatest thing that they could say. You know, that you could actually be qualified as a man to be able to participate in government. But that sort of sparked my interest and I thought, well, maybe there is a role out there. That was before I decided

to run for the [California State] Assembly

YATES Well you mentioned that you had gotten involved in supporting this bond issue

BERGESON Right

YATES And how did that happen?

BERGESON Mainly through my activities with the library I was president of Friends of the [Newport Beach] Library worked on the PFO In fact my husband Garth was the president of the PFO which was the Parent Faculty Organization as opposed to PTA And we were active in fighting the airport back here in the Mariners Community Association I was also on the Newport Harbor Philharmonic Associates [Upper Bay] getting kids We were trying to get programs started with kid s scholarships from musicians I don t know It seems like I You know there was the Children s Theater Guild and we came in contact with a lot of people that were on In fact very good friends of mine that were on the city council and on the school board and you know they just said

YATES Led from there

BERGESON You d be a good person Would you like to head this school bond election up? We worked very hard at it We did a lot of work on it and it was not successful as I said

YATES You mentioned that you won this school board election by not a lot of votes You didn t think you were going to win

BERGESON No Well I was running against a fellow [Ernst H Krause] who was a UCI [University of California Irvine] professor Very bright He had the newspaper endorsement We had people of great stature running for the school board It was really amazing The vice president of Beckman [Instruments] We had a fellow who was CEO of one of the large companies who then left and He was there a short time But it was just a tremendous talent that was available then for running for boards of education I don t think you ll find [now]—not to demean those that do—but I don t think you ll find the background [that] really contributed much to what I think [helped] a lot of the early development of school districts At the time I think schools were perhaps doing a better job and that s what we ll probably get to later But I really do believe that you know the fellow that was running against me was very You know I would have conceded him to be an outstanding candidate to think that He was a Democrat which was probably one of the reasons but there was not that much partisanship I don t think local boards In fact I don t think I ever put Republican on anything but I was viewed as Well to digress there was a feeling that there was an intrusion of what the John Birch Society the ultra conservative people were really viewing as a real tidal wave sweeping Orange County And this was at the time that Jimmy—John [G] Schmitz you know the folks got in before John Schmitz but [James Boyd] Jimmy Utt It was a far more conservative base but

some of that still exists I mean there's been much of that But of course I've always been I was devoted to public education So of course there were some who said well I was a member of the John This was political stuff you know They were doing that even in those days But we ran our campaign on fifty dollars so it was considerably different than it is now when you're talking about funds expended But there were claims that I was a member of the John Birch Society and I remember that I thought that was so ridiculous But I mean those were the kinds of charges that were being made and I just said it was stupid I had been involved in public education all my life I can And they were out to eliminate public schools and the whole feeling that anything with government was bad

YATES So even though it's supposed to be a non-partisan office it sounds like those issues came up

BERGESON Yeah at that time that was an issue that was raised and I so think that could have had And yet the county was very conservative I mean make no mistake Orange County was very very conservative but a lot of the Newport Beach At that time as I say this complete distrust in Somehow the organized crime had swept itself into some of the activities there I mean the accusations were outrageous But anyway there was the fear then from some of the people that maybe I was connected with a part of the fringe elements

YATES Well why did you win do you think?

BERGESON In that race you know it was so totally different It's hard to even imagine how I mean I had a lot of PTA support because of what I had done I did not have a lot of support in Costa Mesa and that's where I was concerned and yet I did win in the I mean the last precinct—it was a Mesa Verde precinct which is in Costa Mesa but it was more like Newport Beach It was this area surrounding the golf club You know they were involved with the country club activities and so a little bit more like Newport But there was a definite feeling you know among Newport Beach people that this is Gold Hill It was very strong and

YATES [When] you mean there you're talking about the area where you lived?

BERGESON Them against us Yeah Because Newport voted almost entirely against unification Costa Mesa voted almost entirely for it There's more people Because they thought they could get some of Newport Beach You know the ability to finance at a higher level So that was primarily the motivation for Costa Mesa and so for me to be from Newport Beach Except that the gentleman that I was running against also was from Newport Beach See we ran by trustee areas and there was a little area of Costa Mesa that was included within the area but we ran at large so we took the entire district vote I had really good grass roots support I've always had I mean that's always been my style is to energize as much of the grass roots volunteer type

YATES What did you learn from that particular campaign that has carried you

through?

BERGESON Well I walked precincts I did you know the things that We operated out of somebody's family room and it was really a much more grass roots effort I think than what you even find school board races now that now cost considerably more And yet I've seen it as we get through each of the elections a tremendous change that you just couldn't win an election the way you used to You don't have the volunteer women that you used to have because they're working You know the younger women And the older women simply don't have [Laughter] They don't have the stamina to get up and do the things they used to do You know they sit around and they keep saying Things are terrible and you've got to do something but they can't do it

YATES Once you were elected—and I'm just checking my notes here Now this is again the Newport Beach City School District Board of Education and you were on that for a year Is that correct? And that's when it became the Newport Mesa Unified School District Board of Education?

BERGESON Right It ceased Actually I think there was a period there was an overlap for them to get out Do themselves out of business

YATES I see

BERGESON But then the new district took effect I think you know at a time after the election

YATES OK

BERGESON So there was a transition period

YATES And pardon my ignorance about how this works because I m not as familiar with how boards of education work but what was the actual Words are escaping me Was there an election to vote for the unification? You said you were against the unification

BERGESON Yeah

YATES How did that actually come about?

BERGESON The unification election was separate Sometimes they have them together and in this case they were separate So they had the unification election and then they had the board election in the subsequent election

YATES I see So even though you were against the unification you got elected?

BERGESON Uh huh

YATES OK That s interesting

BERGESON Yeah And there was one other it was Don Strauss He was the vice president of Beckman Instruments and he also He and I were the two Newport Beach He was on the Newport Elementary as well We were the only two that were elected

YATES Now you were on the Board of Education then until 77 Is that correct?

BERGESON Right

YATES That s the timing I have Until you

BERGESON I ran for the assembly in 1976 but I stayed on the board during that time And I don t know whether you want to get into that because the 76 is

really the unusual election. It wasn't the '78 election. It was the '76 election.

YATES: Well, why don't we talk a little. Maybe next time that's where we can pick up is with the '76 election.

BERGESON: Yeah, because that involves not only an election but a write-in campaign so that is one that is still talked about. It was a very strange set of circumstances.

YATES: Well, let me ask you. Now, I saw that you were also involved in the California School Boards Association [CSBA] and explain to me how does that fit into what you're doing on the school board, etc.

BERGESON: Well, the school boards in California have an organization that's a collective. I mean, it's made up of a delegate assembly. Delegate assembly members are selected by the districts and then stand for an election. Then you have a regional board of directors of which you have a representative group that serves as the board of directors for the California School Boards Association. You also have regional boards of education. So you have the Orange County board of education. I mean the Orange County School Boards Association. And so the state CSBA which is California School Boards Association represents all of the school districts in the state. And as I say, the delegate assembly members are elected, then the board of directors are elected out of the delegate assembly representatives and then you move into the leadership which is

the president the vice president There s a four year period of time
that you re there First vice president second I think there s

YATES I saw also you were regional director Is that tied into the leadership?

BERGESON Yeah The regional directors You don t necessarily have a president
but generally it comes from your regional board of directors And then
that s voted on by the entire delegate I mean the delegates assembly
represents all of the school boards in California And so the delegate
assembly votes on the president and then the vice president at their annual
meetings And so you move up through the chairs And in that way you
actually have I think it s a four year [period] because you go from first
vice president or vice president and then president and then the last year
So you serve a year following your term

YATES Like an immediate vice president or

BERGESON So once you re in that sequence it s rare Even though you have to go
through an election for each one of those but it s generally that once you
start you know

YATES You re in it

BERGESON Automatic Yeah

YATES Now how did you get involved in that?

BERGESON Through the delegate assembly So I was active there And the reason I
got involved with the delegate assembly was because of the uniqueness of

our district which because of Serrano [v] Priest¹ which was a decision handed down that was to equalize education that districts like Newport Mesa Beverly Hills [Board of Education] were put into a squeeze where they were losing funds And what we were trying to do was to get an equitable distribution that wouldn't bring everybody down but allow everybody to come up which under the court decision We were having a real struggle because Newport Mesa having been extremely successful in forming a new district with lots of new great ideas You know everybody was terribly excited about what we had been able to accomplish And then at the same time was the entry of collective bargaining formal collective bargaining which was the Rodda Act² And so with that because of the uniqueness of this district I got involved I was on the school finance School finance is very very complicated and that was another thing the guys on the local board felt you know somebody should know something about kids so we'll have a woman but leave the financing to us Well I decided to become an expert in school finance because I thought you know they're going to have to come to me to find out what's going on which I did I went down to the county I learned all about how you finance schools the intricacies of the financial formulas and so forth and that got me involved with the state financing

1 Serrano v Priest 487 P 2d 1241 1244 (Cal 1971)

2 S B 160 1975 1976 Reg Sess Cal Stat ch 961 (1975)

YATES I see

BERGESON And so through what our district was having to go through with Serrano the entire picture of trying to re formulate what they were doing then which was working with what they call S B 90 which was a bill that Wilson [C] Riles was working with which we didn't like. We weren't able to do much. But anyway that was part of the implementation of Serrano. And then again as you were moving into the collective bargaining to try to maintain some base for management to be able to have some control the only thing that we ever got I was president of the CSBA working with [Edmund G] Jerry Brown [Jr] during the time that we were Nineteen seventy five when collective bargaining came into being and that's when I visited the capital. Had dinner. I had an invitation to have dinner with Jerry Brown. You know coming from kind of an aura about what governors were and you can think of the candles and the chandelier and everything. We were ushered into this little room. We were stuck in a place with I mean it was just awful. They brought us this shrimp tempura that I'll never forget. It was like plastic it was just terrible. And Jerry Brown was running back and forth between CTA [California Teachers Association] and between CSBA and ACSA [Association of California School Administrators]—that's the administrators—trying to negotiate a deal. He had just accomplished something to do with Medi Cal or with Medicare or something. Anyway

something that he felt that he had accomplished. So he was going to solve this one tonight so he'd run in. "They said this do you want to do it?"

No, we don't want to do it. And he'd come back and say, "You're hopeless." [Laughter] So he sent us on our way and said he couldn't deal with us. But that was at a time when it was very traumatic because of the tugging and pulling of public employees and it was a time when there was a lot of disagreement. Labor. We knew we had to get a decent agreement so that you had an understanding of what collective bargaining was. It had to relate to wages and salaries. We didn't want working conditions because that included everything. We were not successful in anything except one little part we got in the Rodda bill which would disallow strikes but it was based rather obliquely on case law. And of course the first thing PERB, the Public Employee Relations Board, threw that out. So I mean, we were not really very successful in trying to build a strength, you know, so that we felt that there could be some balance as far as the negotiating process.

YATES: That's very complicated. I'm afraid I'm not as cognizant about all that as I understand what you're talking about though.

BERGESON: I mean, all of these issues were very. The school finance issue, the base that we were working on. We tried to establish a regional base for districts that, you know, were being squeezed down. That was what they were actually called. It's the squeeze factor. And of course

Prop[osition] 13¹ was to come later We ll get into that because that was part of one of my elections as well

YATES Right

BERGESON But during that period of time and I happened to head a time Timing is everything and I hit the time for the president of CSBA when there was a great deal of exposure legislatively and so I had a very high profile position In fact [Peter B] Pete Wilson was president of the League of [California] Cities That s where I met Pete It was during a time that he was representing the League of Cities and a lot of this had to do with labor negotiations as well And then of course with education and financial issues as well as the whole issue of the authority within school districts management and employee collective bargaining

YATES You mentioned that you were one of the few women on the board Is that correct?

BERGESON Uh huh

YATES In terms of when you actually went on in 1964? And so how did those dynamics work? What did you learn from that?

BERGESON Well I think I m very competitive I think you find most people in politics tend to be competitive and I don t like to not know something and when we would got to a meeting and I still have that compulsion

1 Proposition 13 (June 1978) tax limitation

If something comes up and I don't know I mean if I ever make a mistake on information I am going to be the most well informed person in the world to make sure that I have the right information so that I don't make that mistake twice But it was the same thing with gaining information that I never wanted to be pigeon holed because they say 'You can be the one to visit the classrooms Yes I want to visit the classrooms but I want to know also what goes into those classrooms and how they're financed and what does the picture look like and that's why finance was very intriguing to me And it carried through in the legislature as well I always wanted to serve on budget committees and that because I found out whoever has the money The money is what controls it drives everything Policy is all driven by the funds that are appropriated for those purposes and that was really where I would consider myself perhaps feeling the impact of where women had been designated But I never really felt You know I would not say that I came through feeling as a feminist that I had to get out there and battle men down in order Because I always felt I pretty much got what I deserved and if people paid attention to me it's because they respected my opinion not because I was a woman [but] because I had the information that would be helpful to whatever contribution I could make You know when I was president of CSBA there was one other woman

Georgiana Hardy who had preceded me and she was president of the Los Angeles school board [Los Angeles Board of Education]

YATES Right I know that name

BERGESON At that time you know it was a concern because a lot of the issues coming before Whether I could handle it Because I m sure the subtleties were that you know Can you be tough enough in these situations? And I think that for the most part they found that my ability was probably superior to most others that you would consider to be either male counterparts or whatever And that s why when my friend Mr [Alfred] Newman said You think like a man and I think it was because they felt that I could handle Which I took as a compliment But I m not really sure most people would think that was a compliment

YATES Right

BERGESON Certainly not in today s world

YATES It s a double edged

BERGESON Not in today s world I ve said so often it s all timing The environment you re playing in

YATES Well we re almost at the end here So if you don t mind why don t we stop at this point and then we can pick up We haven t spent a lot of time on the school board activities but you can always bring that in as experience but we can start with the 76 election How does that sound?

BERGESON Sounds fine

YATES Great

[End Tape 1 Side B]

[Session 2 April 24 2000]

[Begin Tape 2 Side A]

YATES Good morning again

BERGESON Good morning

YATES We'll get started. I was explaining to you that when we ended the session last time I said we'd pick up with your election in 1976 but after listening to the tape from our last session I realized there were a few things I didn't ask you about. Plus I wanted to ask you more questions on other topics that we did start to get into. The first is we really haven't discussed your experiences as a teacher so I was hoping you'd tell me about your first teaching experience and where and when it was.

BERGESON Well my first teaching experience actually was in Utah. As I graduated from Brigham Young University I taught in Provo Utah for a year while my husband completed his education. I taught kindergarten. We had eighty children. There were two teachers. We had forty in the morning and forty in the afternoon. And when we had rainy/snowy days we always hoped that we ended up with the same number of boots. The kids always if they went out for recess had to be completely de-booted.

un booted [Laughter] The zippers on all the jackets of course It was quite a job but I loved it It was great We had a wonderful class The kids were exciting to work with and I thoroughly enjoyed it

My next challenge came when right after we had moved to California Well I shouldn't say right afterwards because it was when my two oldest children were older—they were just starting school—and so I decided I'd like to go back and

YATES So elementary school?

BERGESON To teach Uh huh And I had not been in teaching or had not been in the classroom for five or six years and so it was difficult to get a job and I wanted a job in a good district and I selected Santa Monica Unified School District because it had an outstanding reputation

YATES Now where were you living at that point?

BERGESON We were living in Westwood

YATES OK I remember you talked about that last time

BERGESON Right We were living in Westwood and the teaching in Santa Monica was close very convenient if I could have gotten a job Well the only opening was in an all minority school And this was in the early mid fifties It was in the mid fifties I presume around 1955 '56 and I took this job I took a position as a fourth grade teacher I didn't know that the teacher had just gotten out on a nervous breakdown It was a very very difficult class [It was a] fourth grade class of kids that had been a real

problem throughout their school years. It was primarily 'Negro' in those days as we called children. They were Negro or colored and there was one or two Asians and that was it; there were no Caucasian children at all. This was in a section of Santa Monica. It was very segregated but it was my best teaching experience. I learned more from that class. I think to prepare me for really understanding how you motivate, how it's difficult to motivate, the frustrations of having parents that didn't have the ability to function well to give the children an environment that was helpful for their learning and their education.

And I guess I was rather frustrated because the principal said, 'Just be sure that they stay in their seats and you can teach them to dance and to sing because that's what they do best and we don't expect too much academically.' And of course being a teacher who had a great deal more optimism for what kids could do, I resented that and so I initiated several classes—I shouldn't say classes—but several subject areas in science that I thought were interesting for kids and that they could suddenly find something maybe that would give them some motivation to want to come to school. Of course they always came to school because there was no place else for them; they were happier at school than they were anywhere else because there wasn't much in their home life. They were, for the most part, very, very low economic backgrounds. Great sense of humor. The kids were wonderful. They had a wonderful sense of humor and I

enjoyed that because they could be a lot of fun in the classroom. I always thought I was going to write a book about my experiences there because I had so many humorous experiences with the kids. But they loved science. I taught them astronomy and we used it for art lessons and we did drama around it. We did a lot of things that we really built an interest and the kids were great. By the end of the year the central office was coming in to visit the classroom. So I think I proved to myself that expectations could be raised for kids. I also knew that you needed assistance as a new teacher because the first day it was pandemonium and I wasn't sure whether I feared for my life and I was going to run from the classroom forever because of the experiences that I encountered with kids challenging me as a new teacher thinking of course. Well here's another one. You know we're going to take care of her in a hurry.'

YATES When did you start teaching them? Was it mid year or

BERGESON It was in a mid year. The teacher had gone out as I indicated. She had gone out and you know I could understand part of her problems. The teacher next door [George] came into the room and he said I suspect you need a little help. And he also was Negro as that was the reference in those days. He was a Negro teacher and probably was the most inspirational teacher I have ever met the way he worked with the kids the assistance he gave me. Because as a new teacher you don't want to tell the principal that you can't handle the class. I mean that's sort of an

admission that you can't do the job and

YATES How did he inspire you or motivate you?

BERGESON Because he would come in and he would talk to the kids and he would explain to them why it was important to respect the teacher. And he gave me the assistance and gave me some hints on what to do discipline wise.

And out of that came my understanding and feeling for teacher support in induction programs and later when I was in the legislature one of the issues that I addressed and felt very strongly about was induction for beginning teachers and that became the BTSA Program or the Beginning Teacher Assessment Program which is one of the most successful programs in teacher training today. But because of my experiences I could really identify with the need for new teachers to have that support system and to have someone to mentor and to help them to better understand classroom management. And I still think that one of the biggest problems that teachers face is discipline because if the kids are in control you can do wonderful things and if they're out of control you're not going to do anything because it just isn't going to happen.

YATES How large were your classes though?

BERGESON Classes were fairly large. They were probably thirty-two, thirty-three but this was the fourth grade. Then I eventually taught first and second grade as well and that

YATES At the same school?

BERGESON At the same school I was there for three years I think Three years And then I wanted to try another environment so I transferred then to another school that was more heterogeneous and the classrooms were It was in what you consider a lower middle income area

YATES Where was that?

BERGESON This was also in Santa Monica

YATES OK

BERGESON All of my

YATES Now the first school that was Garfield Elementary? Because I did see an article that you talked about that

BERGESON Right Yeah Yeah

YATES And where was the second school?

BERGESON And the second one was at John Muir [Elementary School] which is on Lincoln Boulevard I enjoyed my teaching experiences very much I had problems because they were going through a philosophy of education that I was not particularly supportive of and that was at that time the sight language It s now whole language but it was sight language at that time So I used to have to bootleg phonics into the classroom And that was not an accepted policy and I was criticized by the local principal there for not using the district s adopted policy materials but I felt strongly that I knew kids were learning better and so I felt that was the way I wanted to teach them

YATES How did you work? I mean if that was a conflict with the principal how did you work within that

BERGESON Well you know I explained and I tried to I mean but I continued on which [I] would do decoding and the sort of thing that I thought were more successful in teaching kids how to read I was there for another two years I believe It s hard for me to remember exactly because I came in at mid year and I was there for just less than three years in my first

YATES At Garfield?

BERGESON teaching assignment And then the second one was for either I think it was two years at John Muir And then my husband s business was transferred or he took a job in Newport Beach

YATES Right I remember you

BERGESON So we moved to Newport Beach at that time But the teaching experience I thought was very helpful and though we have changed considerably I think education is always in an interim situation you re moving from one type of a philosophy or a system into another and it just seems that you re constantly revolving trying to find a better way to this magic of how kids learn And I don t think we ve ever found the magic If there is a magic my firm belief is it s two components and that is good teachers and reinforcing parents And if you can get that combination and get the teachers the material and the backing and the support those good teachers are going to be able to inspire kids and if you have the parents that are

there to back up the kids and do what s necessary to make you know to see that they are in a disposition to learn and in an environment that respects the role of the classroom and the teacher and that carries through as soon as they leave the schoolroom door

YATES What about the role of the principal?

BERGESON The principal I felt was very strong Because teachers can only teach to the extent that they have the support and backing of the leadership at that school The leadership has got to build strong collaborative efforts not to threaten teachers but to reinforce and to support them

And I think also on the other hand if teachers are unhappy in the profession they shouldn t have to have that opportunity of staying in the profession I used to go to the lunchroom and I would listen to some of the teachers talk about kids in a way that was so derogatory that I wondered why in the world they were teaching Because in many cases they didn t like kids and they would talk about the kids in a way that I thought was very degrading

YATES Well I m interested At Garfield Elementary which I think you said was basically minority with African American students but a few from other ethnic communities and I was wondering about the makeup of the teachers and what their ethnic background was

BERGESON It was a mix There were no Asian teachers but they did have Mexican American they did have Negro teachers and they did have white teachers

or Caucasian. But it was at the time of the Little Rock [Arkansas] incident and it was the beginning of what you would consider to be a very activist. There were kids that were coming out here from the South and of course as many do, they migrate to communities where they feel more comfortable. And this was a totally segregated school. And I know not long after my experiences there, they integrated the school.

YATES: Oh, really?

BERGESON: And it caused problems because a lot of these kids felt safe by having the support of the kids and they felt comfortable. And to put them in other schools where they didn't feel comfortable, many of those students—because I tried to follow up on some of the kids I had known—they were very violent children at the school. I mean, it was not uncommon to have razor blade fights on the playground. I used to have to go through their desk to make sure that there weren't any little weapons of choice, you know. Not guns but they had. They used to do a lot with razor blades. Because the neighborhood was kind of a rough neighborhood, the kids would find whisky bottles and they would break them over the trash cans and then they'd have a pretty lethal weapon, and sometimes that would become involved in their noon fights.

We had yard duty in those days. We didn't have others come in. I know there were times when we had to have one of the male teachers—and usually they were Negro teachers—that were there to assist

if there were ever those types of problems. They did occur. I remember on one occasion it was a Mexican American teacher who was trying to separate a fight and she was severely bitten and they had to take her to the emergency hospital. It was a very nasty altercation. I know that there were legal issues that came up and it became quite an incident in the community.

But it was a difficult time. It was a very, very difficult time racially and of course that preceded the Watts riots. But I mean you could see that things were fomenting and there was a lot of unrest and probably rightfully so. I mean as I indicated earlier I think that the expectation level of these kids was so woefully low that there would be very little hope for any kind of academic success. And that I think is something that continuously we try to improve and I think it's one of the main efforts fusing into what we're doing today in trying to look at how we bridge that gap.

YATES: Now how did Garfield compare to John Muir in terms of ethnic mixture? I think you said it was more... It wasn't segregated. Is that correct?

BERGESON: No. It was more lower middle income. There were very poor children there as well. And there were some Negro children. They were mostly poor Caucasians.

And it's interesting because I missed the sense of humor, the fun of the kids at Garfield. I mean we always had a... I mean once they had

confidence in you you became their security I mean a teacher could be on a real ego trip there because the kids really did they really bonded to the teachers that they liked and there was a tremendous feeling of security And as I say a lot of humor They were

YATES How would that manifest itself? Give me an example

BERGESON Well just in the way that they would kid with you You know I mean it wasn't malicious it was just kind of a bouncy way of reacting to the world They were always good little athletes I mean the kids could just run circles around a lot of the other kids when they get in some of these intramural types of programs And they did try the Boys Club The tried in the afternoon programs to provide activities for kids and of course that was one way that they were trying to get them more involved and put them into a community atmosphere

YATES So John Muir had a different atmosphere?

BERGESON They had a little different feel It was a much larger school Garfield was a very small school It was a much larger school The classes were larger and the kids you know It was an interesting But to me it was not as challenging as my prior experience but I did enjoy it I learned a lot there as well I had split grades and found out the difficulties of how you work with children that have varying learning abilities and they Just the timing of how you present curriculum material and

YATES I think I know what you mean by split grades but explain what does that

mean

BERGESON Well where you have a combination grade you ll have a second and a third grade in the same classroom Third fourth first second

YATES Would there be more than one teacher or just one teacher?

BERGESON No No There s only one teacher but it s where you don t come out even You know you have so many first graders and all of a sudden you have more first graders than can fit You don t want to put I mean you can t because Before we had class size reduction So you have to fill that up with another grade level

YATES I see This sounds like more of an administrative thing than a philosophical approach to teaching

BERGESON Oh yeah When I was doing my student teaching going way back to college we worked on what we call the ungraded primary unit which was to let kids go as fast as they can through the first three grades [philosophy] You know there are still schools that use that where you have one room schooling In a lot of your rural areas where the kids will be pretty much almost on a one to one basis But you need very very small classes to do that because you have to be able to work almost individually with the students

YATES But that wasn t what was going on in your situation?

BERGESON No no no It was just a size I mean just to

YATES To deal with Right

BERGESON The number of kids

YATES Well you talked a little bit about developing your I think approach to teaching and the importance to you of phonics versus sight or whole language and I was wondering how did you develop your teaching approach or what were the main influences for you in terms of developing your approach?

BERGESON Well of course you use the adopted materials The state has always required you know for your elementary grades that you have to use the adopted materials And so I mean we would use the textbooks or outline and go through that material but see there was always a lot of time that you could use when it rained to be in the lunchroom You know if you had the kids in for lunch you could have games I used to always have phonic games that we would play I mean there were many many ways that you could sort of As I say you literally have to bring them in at a time when you have that much flexibility When I used to teach we didn't The unions were I mean I was a member of the union I was hospitality chairman [Laughter]

YATES I remember you mentioning that

BERGESON But it was a different scenario I mean when I couldn't get a child's parent to school I'd go to their home And you can gain an awful lot when you walk in that house and walk into their home and you'd know exactly where the problems were I mean it would be very evident why

mom or if there was but very seldom was there ever a father figure in the home or there were several You know you'd have many families where every child would have a different father and they would never be around long enough to even see the child born And so you had a lot of socioeconomic problems that kids you know And I used to marvel that the kids did as well as they did when you'd see some of the you know the very dysfunctional relationships that they actually came from So that gave you I mean if you were able to visit and to gain a better understanding

And yet on the other hand we had a very active PTA I remember the PTA meetings we had The local postman who was the PTA president I mean they were very very concerned about their kids And I always believed that parents want to be good parents Sometimes they just lack the skills or the time Many of them had to work and many of the kids were left home because in many cases the mothers were domestics and they were subject to whatever hours were required and obviously didn't coincide sometimes with what the kids' hours were

We had a shower in the basement Oftentimes we had to actually shower the kids It got pretty rough [Laughter] in the classroom with some of them and so you know for hygiene purposes Or we'd provide shoelaces when their shoes kept falling off because they didn't have So I mean it was really an eye opener as to a day to day basis of what

kids have to go through. You know, the disadvantages that these kids had. Health problems were tremendously apparent. I mean, one thing about it, if they had reached the age of six, they probably were immune to most everything because they were subjected to so many infectious type diseases when they were growing up. But I remember they would come to school with these awful sores, you know? We'd send them to the nurse and they'd be right back in the classroom. But it wasn't a problem to get them to school. Their attendance was very

YATES Good?

BERGESON Sometimes you'd wonder, you know, when they were as sick as they were, why they were at school but that was their

YATES They may not have had any choice.

BERGESON Yeah, that was their place to be. They had the sociability of their friends. And, as I say, if they had a teacher that they bonded to, that was really the security of their life.

YATES Well, I remember you mentioned, I think, last time, I don't remember if it was a kindergarten teacher or a first grade teacher, and you didn't. I think you mentioned in passing something about phonics or your belief in phonics or developing your belief in phonics, the influence of this teacher [Ann Wilson Ferguson]. Is that correct?

BERGESON Yes. And she's still a teacher near Malibu.

YATES So what happened to convince you of that? I'm looking for, I guess, if

there are individuals or through your teaching experience what sort of helped you to gel your own perception of what works in the classroom?

BERGESON Well I always liked to find somebody who knows how to do it I mean to me that s the best way to learn And you either observe or you listen to or you read about you know the techniques and the methods I ve always felt it s very important to surround yourself with people that are smarter than you are because you learn that way As I have gone through whether it s in teaching or whether it s in whatever business or work that I ve been in I have always learned so much from people that I have a respect because I feel that they have either the finger on the pulse or they have some solution to really getting a process to work or a system to make more effective or whatever And so it was with my teaching As I indicated the fellow next The office or the

YATES Classroom?

BERGESON Classroom next door

YATES What was his name? Do you remember?

BERGESON You know his name was George [] and I can t think of his last name

YATES Well maybe later

BERGESON Yeah There was Al Quinn who went on to become an assistant principal in Where was he? He went with a community college [Santa Monica Community College District] I have sort of forgotten This was a long time ago

YATES No I realize that This was a fellow teacher?

BERGESON There were two There were two Negro teachers at the time And I use the term because that was the term that you used at the time

YATES At the time

BERGESON Right In fact you could not use the term black if you used the term black that would incite a fight on the playground And there was a good deal of differentiation between color I mean the lighter skinned students discriminated against I mean the darker colored were discriminated against So there was a gradation of color which showed I think it really pointed out a lot of the problems you know that there was something about the very dark skinned people that even became symbolic to people within the Negro race that there was some shame that rested with that

YATES I m sidetracking here a little bit but what about the treatment of Mexican American students?

BERGESON At that time I don t think kids recognized that that much You know I don t really think that that was as much an issue because I think it was more within their own race There wasn t a lot of socialization There were so few Mexican kids Mexican American but they were [called] Mexican kids You know that was the terminology But there were so few And if they were it was mixed you know you d have maybe a Negro mother having a father with Mexican background And it would depend a lot because a lot of the Mexican American kids were as dark as

the others. You couldn't tell because it was usually a mixture

YATES OK. Well, you were talking about influences and teachers and other people.

BERGESON Yeah and mentors. And this young woman that I got to know, you know. She was the first person I met actually when I took the job.

YATES Who was this?

BERGESON Her name is Ann Wilson Ferguson and

YATES She was a teacher? At Garfield?

BERGESON Yeah. She still is a teacher. She knew how to handle kids. She was little bitty. She was a five footer, less than five feet tall, probably about four foot eleven, and she weighed probably ninety pounds. And the kids snapped to. She knew exactly how to handle them, she had great discipline power. The kids loved her. She was always sought after. She and I left Garfield about the same time and she went to Malibu. And she's still teaching at [John L.] Webster Elementary [School] in Malibu. One of the best teachers I have ever known. I mean, I would say that it wasn't because of the textbooks she used. She just had that quality of being able to inspire kids into. I mean, she treated them like her own. She never had any children of her own. And I mean, they were all her kids and they all had this great affection for her as a person. And she was just extremely effective. She was one of those, I think, that just had the talent to be able to communicate well, and along with that, I think, the love of kids that

really gave her the ability to be what I consider one of the more outstanding teachers I've ever known

YATES OK Is there anyone else you can think of that

BERGESON As far as teachers? Not really I think that they are so few and far between Most teachers they're there because it's a job That used to distress me because a lot of people as I indicated I don't think are that committed to kids I think it was more because many people in those days particularly with my generation about all you could be was a teacher Teacher social worker or nurse Secretary That was about it Very limited

YATES Right Well when you moved from Westwood to Newport Beach because your husband changed jobs what were your plans in terms of continuing teaching?

BERGESON I loved teaching and I remember every September I'd feel that feeling like I wasn't part of it because I wasn't going back to the classroom I did some substituting I had two more children when we came here

YATES Oh right I think you mentioned timing wise

BERGESON And that you know I felt well I had four little kids But I thought I would substitute and so I did some substituting I learned a lot substituting too

YATES It's tough being a substitute teacher isn't it?

BERGESON Oh it's a very very difficult job but you certainly learn about classrooms

YATES What did you learn substituting that you hadn't learned before?

BERGESON Well when I did teach I knew that I would never want to substitute in my room unless I was completely organized [Laughter]

YATES Yes on a practical level I'm sure it's difficult

BERGESON In fact I think I came to school many times when I was ill just because I didn't want [Laughter] anyone to know my lesson plans weren't up to date you know of that date But I think substituting gives you a feeling for understanding the differences that go on with classroom techniques Because you could walk into a classroom and you'd know whether there was good organization and you know whether the teacher really doesn't put that much into it It's very apparent And so I did enjoy that And then I ran for the school board and of course I felt if I was going to be on the school board that I should not be working in a district where I was substituting so I did not teach after that That was my last actual teaching experience

YATES What grade levels did you substitute teach?

BERGESON I don't think I went much above the fifth grade but everything from kindergarten through fifth grade

YATES So you've had some experience in all those grades basically

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Well you know you mentioned too about the bond issue that you became involved in or chaired the committee? Is that the right

terminology?

BERGESON Yes

YATES And what was the bond exactly?

BERGESON Well it was the school building bond Because we had a couple I was thinking this was the last one but before unification—I think we got into some of the issues on unification In Newport Beach I got involved mainly through Friends of the Library through all these various children s organizations And through them I became familiar with some members of the Board of Education And so there was a great deal of expansion planned for the Newport Beach Elementary district And so they needed to have more money to build schools and so we had a bond election and it failed

YATES Right I remember you mentioning Why do you think it failed?

BERGESON Well it was shocking Nobody could understand it

YATES Because I m thinking this would have been 62 63

BERGESON This was the first time they had ever known in this area to have a school bond fail But I think it was when there was this conservative element coming in that were sort of anti tax anti school They were finding ways that somehow schools were being invaded to Communist conspiracy theories and all that sort of thing

YATES So cold war influence?

BERGESON Yeah So the attitude was finally not finally but was suddenly much

more skeptical of government and institutions. And I think the schools were feeling a bit of that. So the bond election failed and it was very, very frustrating, and then not long after that then the unification election came along. And so the new superintendent came in after we had hired him—I don't know whether you want to go that far into the next. My next quest, of course, was running for the school board.

YATES: Right. No, go ahead. I was just interested in a little bit about your experiences regarding the bond election and also in connection to perhaps things later, you know, that you may have learned from that experience, both politically or running for office, and also in explaining the dynamics of the district.

BERGESON: I think we sort of just expected that people would support their schools. I mean, I don't think that there was any feeling other than if you tell people that we need more money to build schools, that they'll do it because they are that concerned about their kids.

YATES: So what happened once that bond election failed?

BERGESON: You know, the plans had to be revised, and many of the claims were that this is going to be very detrimental towards the building of schools in Newport Beach. We had a pretty good relationship with the Irvine Company at that time, and the Irvine Company was providing for sites. They didn't build the schools, but in their master plan they would set aside sites with a provision that if they were not built on by ten years, then they

would revert back to the Irvine Company. And so there were some school sites that we had planned for a lot of the development. Well, actually what happened is a lot of the development did not occur because Proposition 20¹ which was the Coastal [Zone Conservation] Commission proposition was passed overwhelmingly which pretty well eliminated a lot of the development along the coast.

YATES: Now, that's later, though, right? Isn't Prop. 20¹ like 1972 or so?

BERGESON: It was when I was running in 1976, so it was a little later.

YATES: Oh, right. I have a different time line, but OK.

BERGESON: But I'm saying that's what happened, so that a lot of the projections for growth fell far short and then, of course, Irvine was looking at developing land. They wanted a window to the sea, and so they were moving in, trying to gain access through the Irvine Unified School District, and that was. And, of course, we had Laguna. So it was a time when everybody was sort of not certain what was going to happen as far as ultimately, what students are we going to have to serve? What geographical areas will the school district cover?

YATES: So this first bond election perhaps was a sign of

BERGESON: I think a kind of pulling back as far as you know, the ability of the district to be able to expand to a greater extent.

YATES: I think I sidetracked you because you started to talk about the

1 Proposition 20 (November 1972) Coastal Zone Conservation Act

superintendent?

BERGESON Well let me see Let s start again The Newport Beach Elementary [School District] and the [Newport Mesa Unified School District] and the Newport Harbor Union District then unified I think I went through this election before I was one of those that opposed the election

YATES Or the unification

BERGESON And it was successful and I won my election by sixty nine votes But the first thing that the board did was to hire a superintendent that could provide what we consider to be the lighthouse district And we wanted to find the best that we could And there was a new superintendent—in fact he d been written up in Time magazine—his name was Leland Newcomer and he was superintendent of the Las Vegas Clark County schools

I remember we got up and it was during the winter time and it was raining and we got in this small airplane and flew to Las Vegas to meet him and to kind of cover the countryside to talk to people to find out you know what they thought of him And we liked what we saw He was what you would consider more unconventional He had ideas of which they re still talking about which would be more decentralized participation you know management at the site level and differentiated staffing a lot of the concepts that actually are very much on the front burner now but for a lot of reasons it was difficult to implement then If

you want to get more into that we can talk about that But when we hired him of course one of the things that he felt he had to do was again to build this base of support by being able to construct new schools and to look at the growth

Costa Mesa was under a state building plan so they had parts of schools because as they had parts of communities where they had so many students and they could build an increment for that school Newport Beach of course was not state funded because it was a high wealth district and as the wealth that was created could build the schools out of that wealth as well Costa Mesa of course had money from the state to build their schools

YATES I see

BERGESON And so I mean there were different building programs That s why there are a lot more schools in Costa Mesa than there are in Newport Beach And there were larger schools actually in Newport because they were able to build larger campuses and they had smaller like three and four hundred students at a campus in Costa Mesa Of course this is one of the points of unification to equalize the resources and try to provide that you have the same opportunities in Costa Mesa as you do in Newport Beach And in order to do this it was going to require more capital and Newcomer who was a progressive superintendent went to the public for this bond The public turned it down and he became frustrated and left

He said

YATES Oh Now is this the same The first bond or a second bond?

BERGESON No this was the second bond

YATES OK Because by then you were on the school board

BERGESON Right I was on the school board I mean we were working this We had other chairmen There were community people that we had

YATES But this was a second attempt then to pass a bond

BERGESON But it was the new unified district

YATES I see

BERGESON The first one was just Newport Beach Elementary

YATES This was Costa Mesa and Newport

BERGESON This was Costa Mesa Newport and the combination with the high school district as well And it failed It was a very traumatic time Tremendous morale problems trying to merge these three districts where you had separate administrations and everyone of course was threatened And it was a very difficult time There were a lot of loyalties by the board members who had served on the Costa Mesa and on the Newport Harbor Union [boards] And they wanted to see that the people they had worked with were protected and so on A lot of difficulties And of course that s why an outside superintendent who came in and just you know looked at everything from a completely objective view and so made tough decisions And it was a difficult time in the history of the district but

because there was tremendous wealth in this area they were able to create and to continue to provide for what would be considered some extraordinary opportunities educational opportunities

YATES When you say the wealth was there so this was through property taxes and

BERGESON Property tax

YATES OK

BERGESON It was property tax And that was before I mean everything that was gained through property tax went to the schools And of course Costa Mesa was getting some

YATES State?

BERGESON Some help from the state because they were But Newport Beach of course being extremely wealthy in property tax and commercial industrial I mean everything that was created here So it was one of the higher wealth districts in California And then everything changed with the Serrano decision And that's what really made the big difference in education Prop 13 exacerbated it but the first big change in education came through the Serrano decision which then because of the court decision which is the [San Antonio Independent School District v Rodriguez] It was a Texas case where you had to provide equal opportunity throughout the state I mean a state function If you had districts up here and down there then you had to do something to

equalize So that s when the state actually took over the role of state funds allocated state funds for public education And that was when what we call the revenue limit was established And that s what really got me involved in a lot of the activities of Sacramento from the state School Boards Association to the legislature [I] was in some way trying to protect those districts that were going to be literally decimated by the Serrano decision And out of that came I mean the districts that were having the greatest difficulty would be Beverly Hills Newport Mesa There were several Santa Barbara I mean where you had high wealth districts but by taking from them you were taking much of what they had built upon to make them extraordinarily effective districts And on the other hand districts that were fast growing were getting money for students So they were continuing to get more money and so it was putting this tremendous disparity now on those former high wealth districts And this was done through what they call a "squeeze factor" And as Serrano and then Prop 13 came all it did was level schools down Rather than increasing it so that every school would be like Newport Mesa every school district was more like you know the poorer districts

YATES Well I wanted to sort of backtrack again a little bit You talked about this somewhat This goes back to your election to the school board in '64 You did talk some about this conservative element And I think you used the word "political claims" as an example that said you were a member

of the John Birch Society And I was hoping maybe you can expand some more on the political climate—and I'm thinking that this also will help when we talk more about when you run for state office—about what was going on I mean you've talked some about it but maybe there's more you can talk about—the issues and the problems that started occurring because of that conservative or whatever the terminology you want to use [element]

BERGESON A lot of the concerns were focused primarily on what is taught in the schools One of the real hot button issues was sex education And this immediately became an issue where there was any course reference to anatomy I mean it got to the point where it was extremely difficult to even provide gym classes And so we tried to involve the parents to bring them in and

YATES But aren't those state mandated?

BERGESON They were state mandated to the extent that you had to have health education and there had to be some understanding you know of sexuality But that became a very inflammatory word with many of the very conservative groups because they felt that they were taking family values and they were being distorted through what they were being taught in school

And then another issue that came up that was extremely difficult to deal with is what they call sensitivity training And that was if you had

any kind of group you know kids talking about it And this was done primarily with kids when they have had problems and they would set up sessions where they would sit around and talk and try to you know work through solutions and understand other people's problems and so forth And that sensitivity training became a real hot button issue as well And again that was a big issue that somehow In fact we had parents going into classrooms with tape recorders and taping lessons and listening you know to these "terrible things" that were going on in the classroom

It was really hard from a school board's point of view to continually reassure parents that we're not trying to destroy families we're trying to provide and support family values and you know work with the school bring them in through PTA groups I remember we showed the films that they were showing in the fifth grade I guess it was when they first got into boy/girl you know that there was a physiological difference I mean those meetings I was chairman of the board or president of the board when they were putting in not necessarily a sex education but a new health education program which addressed some of the sex education issues And I mean you know we had five hundred parents there It got noisy and it was really difficult but that was sort of a movement that went through

YATES Well how did you deal with that? What was the strategy?

BERGESON Very sensitively [Laughter] I mean you had to reassure the parents you

know invite them into the classroom Of course this was going on at the state level as well And many people who were really involved in this would go district to district It all really started in Orange County with the Anaheim Union High School District because they had a sex education program

YATES I see

BERGESON And that became the buzz word and the people that were involved in that were suddenly You know the whole thing just kind of continued to build until it did get to the state level and then of course they had laws that would do certain things And of course it was being carried And I think that's when you started seeing a lot of the factions that developed when it was primarily over those very basic issues sensitivity training What was it that they had? There was another Bloom's taxonomy on education¹ became almost a Communist manifesto

YATES I don't know what that

[End Tape 2 Side A]

[Begin Tape 2 Side B]

BERGESON It was categorizing you know trying to

YATES OK

BERGESON But it has always been a difficulty to try to get some sense of where

1 Benjamin S Bloom editor Taxonomy of Educational Objectives the Classification of Educational Goals (New York D McKay Co c 1956)

You know because I knew these programs were initiated with the kids best interest and parents best interest Because I had always considered myself to be a strong family values person And these programs were to initiate healthy discussions to get parents involved with what their kids were learning to set a sense of responsibility so kids knew what their responsibility and the parents responsibility were in sensitive matters And when things were programmed to be very positive and then all of a sudden to find people out there you know banging on the door and saying This is going to destroy everything when the intent was just the opposite it was always hard I mean it was very difficult for me to be able to understand how best to deal with those issues

YATES So in terms of the impact of these parents you know public citizens on the school board and decisions made about any of the way these things taught what happened?

BERGESON Well the sex education thing never went in I mean [Laughter] that was something that you know

YATES Oh I see So it was supposed to be implemented but it never happened?

BERGESON No I mean the proposal that we had it was so You know the protests were so overwhelming that it was changed substantially and to some extent I think most districts at that time really backed off I mean the pressure was just too great and the politicians of course you know particularly those at the state level as well And I think that's where

some of this issue where people went to address their local concerns and they kept saying Give us local control but at the same time they wanted to put controls on certain things so that they could have that assurance

Also I think there was a very strong effort toward private schools at that time and that's when they were building a number of private schools

YATES How do you think Orange County or maybe I should say the districts that the school board you were on represented compare to districts in other parts of the state?

BERGESON Of course because I was president of the School Boards Association we worked with it a lot I think school boards generally were much more conservative during that period of time because I think that the public was electing people that they felt were going to be more conservative A lot of the issues that have arisen—let's see that was 25 30 years ago—have since changed the dynamics where you have geographically Orange County was always a conservative county

YATES Right

BERGESON And I think that you know now Orange County isn't all that conservative a county In fact when I was elected to the legislature people forget there were more Democrats than Republicans but I mean that was

YATES Yeah well traditionally people think of Orange County as being conservative

BERGESON I think that much of the real ultra conservative movement in California

was initially started when Jimmy Utt I mean a lot of the former legislators who were considered to be part of that very very ultra conservative movement came from Orange County John [V] Briggs Jimmy Utt—I'm trying to think of a few you know that were pretty well identified with that—John Schmitz of course who preceded me I think that when you liken it throughout the state—I think of our delegate assembly meetings—it was pretty conservative I mean the issues you know that we debated on the assembly delegate floor were primarily conservative issues And so I think that it was much more conservative leaning toward school boards

YATES OK Because I don't think of that time as being as conservative whether that's accurate or not is another issue But that's what generally

BERGESON Well it's all gradations yeah But I mean more conservative than what you find today Because I look at the issues coming with the State School Boards Association which I would consider perhaps more to the Left than they are to the right as they were then But Orange County being even farther I think to the right and as I say a lot of it started with this big dissension over the Anaheim sex education program

YATES I see That's interesting

BERGESON And that drew a lot of attention and it really focused And everyone all the parents had great concerns over that You know they suddenly felt this was going to be imposed in all the school districts in Orange

County They eventually dropped it in Anaheim as well

YATES Well again you mentioned John [Briggs] and the movement And in terms of bringing up this connection to the John Birch Society what was the goal of that in terms of your first election?

BERGESON Oh I think it was just you know you try to raise any issue you can

YATES Well obviously that was supposed to be a negative

BERGESON Yeah It was Mainly because at that time the individual who was running against me was a UCI professor and UCI at that point was considered to be ultra liberal I mean sort of the university element is invading kind of mentality at that point

YATES It was a brand new campus

BERGESON Yeah It was a new campus and it was you know I think there was a perception of course that universities tend to be liberal That was just the general feeling And of course he was So I mean it became an issue and of course they asked me Have you ever been a member of the John Birch Society? I'll never forget the question because I said No

YATES Where was this at?

BERGESON It was at a forum where we had all of the candidates there

YATES So you were surprised by that?

BERGESON Well I was sort of surprised because I never really identified [with it] But I mean they were trying just because of who I was running against You're always put in comparison to and I would imagine that he was

probably much more liberal than I was. Even so, I mean, you know, he had a different feeling. He was a Democrat, which was a little different in those days. I had not really identified that much with a party as a local school board member.

YATES Right. Well, it's supposed to be a

BERGESON Because at that time it was a non-partisan position. I had been active in Republican politics but, I mean, I didn't look at the issues that we were dealing with on the school board as strictly partisan. I thought, you know, makes good sense. It's education, you know? How kids learn is what it should focus on.

YATES Well, back to the... I segued there for a minute because you were starting to talk some more about the California School Boards Association and your reasons for getting more involved. Maybe you can continue talking about that.

BERGESON You know, when I first when on the board, it was always sort of felt I should be pigeon-holed and I should be... The superintendent made some comment—I don't know whether he realized it made quite an impact on me—but he said, "It's OK to have a woman because we should have someone that knows about kids." And I felt the way for me to get the attention of my colleagues was to become knowledgeable in finance because I felt that that was something that I was really interested in because I have always sort of liked to know how budgets work. So I went

to the county office and the assistant superintendent of business operations and got a pretty good background on how school finance And it's very complicated And then I got involved on the delegate assembly because of what was happening with Serrano at that time

YATES Right That's right

BERGESON Then I was very much interested in finding how we can solve the complexities of school finance in a way where we don't have to decimate districts and we could hope to level up rather than to squeeze down which is what was happening And so that gave me an interest in those issues and I think—through the delegate assembly and then working through school finance primarily—that's how I eventually moved into the chairs And then also the year that I was president of CSB[A] the issue of collective bargaining came up And that's when

YATES What years exactly now were you

BERGESON That was 1975

YATES 'Seventy five OK

BERGESON In 1974 I think you start

YATES I remember we talked a little bit about it's a four year kind of

BERGESON Yeah You take two years as vice president and then president

YATES Elect?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES So around '75 then you were actually vice president?

BERGESON No '75 I was president

YATES President OK

BERGESON In '74 I would have been you know vice president And then I think you have a couple of vice presidents and then you have the past president

YATES So then it would be '73 '74 you were OK I'm sorry You were talking about this issue of

BERGESON Well the collective bargaining The Winton Act¹ had been what school boards had been utilizing which was being interpreted differently It was not well defined It was causing more problems because the courts were interpreting it one way and districts were whipsawing around you know as far as collective bargaining It wasn't really called collective bargaining it was called meet and confer But the courts were stepping in and were making it difficult to apply So the idea was that there should be some effort to try to find a systematic way of labor management agreements and that's when the issue towards collective bargaining And that started in '74 And then when I was president it really came to a head because the bills were being introduced and Jerry Brown was very much interested in solving all the problems He solved what Medi-Cal problems presumably because he got everybody together And I think I mentioned the dining in the white

1 A B 1474 1964 1965 Reg Sess Cal Stat ch 2041 (1965)

YATES Right with these various entities meeting with him

BERGESON And so he was trying to resolve the problems with collective bargaining. You know, our staff and those of us in the leadership position were working with the staff of Senator [Albert S.] Rodda, who was carrying the bill. And, of course, we were outnumbered. I mean, it was simply a time for labor negotiations. Howard [L.] Berman was very strong at that point and very much a leader as far as both private and public sector. And the public sector was trying to get more involved with labor negotiations where heretofore they had been, as I say, kind of a quasi-meet and confer without actual collective bargaining agreements. The only thing that we were successful in, and I think I mentioned this, was that part of trying to prohibit strikes. And the first thing that happened is it went to PERB and it was thrown out. So I mean we lost. We were simply outnumbered and it really turned around to bite us, you know, from a management perspective. Because it was to be limited in scope, was to only address wages and salaries, and I think they included working conditions, which meant anything. But since then, of course, they have expanded it and one of the major attempts that we persevered with was to limit the scope of bargaining.

YATES OK. What other issues were you involved in while you were president?

BERGESON We worked with Wilson Riles' office on early childhood education. I think that's where I met Marion Joseph, who is now my colleague on the

[California State] Board of Education and John [B] Mockler who's now our CEO. I met him when I think he was finance director and worked with Wilson Riles. But we worked with Wilson Riles on early childhood education. That was an issue obviously that you know I was very much interested in.

YATES When you say you worked with him, what did that mean? Or what did that entail?

BERGESON As the bills were introduced, then we would give support, sit in on the hearings, amend if necessary if we thought it was appropriate. But we worked pretty closely with Wilson on those because we were very supportive of what he was trying to do with early childhood education.

YATES Anything else that stands out?

BERGESON Finance would continue to be the big issue.

YATES The big issue.

BERGESON Yeah.

YATES Well, you know, you were still on the school board at this point.

BERGESON Right.

YATES This sounds like a full-time job being president.

BERGESON Yeah, I made it a full-time job. I mean because of my involvement with CSBA and because we were very much involved with hearings in the legislature and meeting with the staff and

YATES So how did you carry out your duties on the school board while you were

doing the CSBA?

BERGESON Well you have to be a member of a local board in order to be a member of CSBA So I mean it all fit together pretty well you know? I tried to be objective But you obviously carry with you your experiences and some of the experiences that I had had But since I had had a lot of experiences I mean from my work as a teacher as well I think I had a pretty good idea and probably could be pretty objective as far as the impact of a lot of the legislation You know how does this work in the classroom?

YATES You mentioned getting involved almost immediately it sounds like in learning about school financing because you saw that as an important element to everything else Where else did you turn your attention to during those years you were on the school board? Is there anything else? I know you talked about all these issues that came up at the time but was there anything else that you really tried to focus your attention on?

BERGESON No I think you know just running the We were still going through a rather rapid transformation within Newport Mesa I worked really closely with Differentiated staffing was a great idea you know trying to give teachers opportunities to advance their salaries through certain responsibilities that were well defined Collective bargaining threw out a lot of the programs that we had initiated but we were working very closely with the district here So I think with the reformation that we were

attempting And of course anything that would be of assistance but finance drives the whole scenario And losing local control as we were doing with Serrano And then of course it was exacerbated with Prop 13 but I was not on the board when Prop 13 was passed

YATES At that point

BERGESON Yeah But it was you know a full time position We were working on what we called participative management where much of the decisions were being made And I also had my own kids in athletic programs and I tried to attend all of their events I was a full time mom at that time as well as all the activities that I had undergone And I still maintained you know some of my work on community

YATES Sounds busy

BERGESON That I felt supplemented I worked for the schools the [Upper Bay Associates of Orange County] Philharmonic Society We worked at trying to get scholarships for kids and provide musical instruments for kids that had talent and didn't have the wherewith[al] So a lot of those programs that supplemented As far as legislatively I think our major efforts were in collective bargaining primary education and the finance issues

YATES Well you mentioned last time too that being president at least at that time was a high profile position And you just mentioned getting to know Marion Joseph and I can't remember the name of the man you just

mentioned

BERGESON John Mockler

YATES OK And then obviously you would have met Wilson Rules and other people And who did you really develop any long term or lasting relationships via being in that position at that point?

BERGESON Well you know a lot of the people are still around Some of them aren't [Kenneth F] Ken Hall who has School Services [of California Inc] He was a consultant to Rodda and then became an advocate for school districts has a business in school services His first job was at Newport Mesa working as a consultant there They do a good job in providing information to school districts advocating for them working you know on their behalf at the legislature But Ken's one that I worked closely with I used to speak at his conferences when he would have them when I was in the legislature and he was working there as an education consultant

YATES I know you said because of this you met Pete Wilson Is that right?

BERGESON And Pete Wilson of course I met because he was president of the League of Cities Of course they didn't get involved in the collective bargaining They were able to maintain through the Meyers [Milias] Brown [Act] Anyway their legislative agreement for collective bargaining in schools were really the ones that There was the Rodda bill S B 160 And then Leroy [F] Greene I met Leroy during that time Leroy and I have

been friends throughout the years and of course he was a I think when I got the first job as a vice chair of education it was like an audition [Laughter] But he was a great mentor He knew a great deal about education And as I say I always learn from those that I felt had the best expertise and Leroy was a good mentor I worked with him both in the assembly As was Gary [K] Hart And the people that I had an instant respect for for their understanding of education issues and worked very closely with them Unfortunately there weren't that many Republicans to identify with because they simply did not get that involved with education issues

YATES Oh you mean just in general they weren't? Or because there weren't that many in the legislature?

BERGESON Education at that point was primarily I mean as far as the policy development Because the unions were so active and they would generally put the money behind the candidates They were Democrat candidates for the most part And so the Republicans didn't bother much with the issues because they were not the campaign contributors that would help them with elections So it was difficult to get Republicans really actively interested in education issues at that time

YATES I see I know that we were bouncing around a little bit there but I wanted to ask you now about the events leading to your decision to run for the state assembly and that was in 1976 and it was the Seventy fourth

Assembly District Correct?

BERGESON Right And it was kind of a surprise opening because [Robert E] Bob Badham had had that district for years and years—fourteen years I believe—and suddenly there was an opening in Congress Andrew [J] Hinshaw had been the congressman and had been indicted for some illegal use or materials that were given to him and therefore was out of office So Assemblyman Badham had an opportunity to run for Congress and he was successful and that left his seat open And there really hadn't been anybody geared up to run because incumbency was kind of a lifetime guarantee

YATES Right

BERGESON And I was asked by a group of people if I would consider running Of course my thought was Never [Laughter] in your life would I want to be part of that system ' And so I pretty well turned them down and said Frankly that doesn't appeal to me

YATES Who was that?

BERGESON It was a group of women that came in they were Republican women and they had heard me speak I talked a lot about collective bargaining because it was a Republican issue you know And what we needed to do to maintain the involvement with parents in the schools and keeping more of a support type thing for public education—what we could do to make our schools better and get parents actively involved And so I went on the

circuit and gave a number of speeches. And so when they came along they thought, "Well, who do we know that... What Republican do we have?" And I think a lot of people that live in this area, the men particularly, don't want to sacrifice careers. Sometimes if it's looked upon as an opportunity for advancement, but there hadn't been that much thought given to anyone in the wings. So I think they were really having a pretty hard time finding a candidate.

Well, finally I went around to find out what measure of success I would have, what kind of support, and I was thinking particularly of some of the men in the business community. Well, I have a friend who's a real go-getter. Her name is [Jacqueline] Jackie Heather, and she was mayor of Newport Beach, and she was pretty sophisticated in the political process. She was one of those that was really pushing me to try to do this, as well. Because she was mayor of the city of Newport Beach, she had a pretty good entry into a lot of the men's business groups and so forth. And so she took me around to get me introduced and, of course, the first feeling was, "Well, you know, she's a PTA lady and we're not really sure that she's got what it takes to go up there and fight in the smoke-filled rooms." And, of course, that made me kind of mad because I thought, you know, [Laughter] maybe we don't need those smoke-filled rooms. So I sort of got my dander up. And at that point, I felt like I should take them on.

I got the support of the Lincoln Club, which was... But I think

they sort of thought Well isn't this kind of nice to have a woman that you know ? And I was pro business and they felt they wouldn't have any problem with me being a representative of the interests that were here in Newport I had always been pretty effective at going around and making my pitch to groups where I knew my subject area and I always felt I needed to know my subject area so I wouldn't make a fool out of myself But with the support that I was able to gain I thought Well I've got a good shot at it ' And there were seventeen on the ballot

YATES I know I actually have the I noticed the number the great number
[Laughter]

BERGESON Well I don't know whether you picked up quite a bit of the information from some of the clippings but it was

YATES Right that you loaned me Yeah There's the list of people for the primary

BERGESON Yeah Well what happened is that Gosh these names

YATES Well before you continue why did you change your mind about thinking that you would look into running? What happened between

BERGESON I've always liked a challenge I mean that's why I jumped out of an airplane at age sixty eight

YATES Oh did you [Laughter]? I don't think I would do that

BERGESON You know I have a competitive spirit and it sort of made me mad when they thought I couldn't handle it when people said "Oh she couldn't

handle it And then I just thought Well you know I don't think that's accurate " You've got to beat the challenge and show them to be wrong And I think that's when I got into the campaign for real I thought Well I'll keep my options open " sort of thing ' But I'm not going to go down because they say I can't do it ' And with that I continued to mount the campaign Well then pretty soon you get to a point where you know people are investing in you You think well there's something there that I've got to honor

YATES Carry through

BERGESON And you don't drop out just because And then you think what you couldn't do So it kind of builds on itself And so it went and

YATES You said there were a large number of candidates

BERGESON There were so many on the ballot yeah I figured well because I was the one that seemed to getting the most money I had the best shot at it And I had management that they provided I remember going around talking to all these various people and they were giving me hints I look back now and I think it was a real challenge I mean just to be able to think that I would have the opportunity to go into some of the CEOs of some of these large corporations and say "Invest in me because I'm going to go out there and do the job for you

But it worked out and I got a lot of really good support A lot of Jackie's work had helped you know by getting an entree to some of these

people that you had to know But once you got in there you had to sell yourself you had to get them to understand that you were really serious So I mean you get more and more serious They drew names

YATES Who s they"?

BERGESON This was one of the strange This kind of gets into the whole intrigue of the election Because there had not been a non incumbent running for all these years nobody knew that the filing would be postponed for a week because of a non incumbent running

YATES Oh I didn t realize that

BERGESON Well I mean because the incumbent was not running again And no one knew that either And so I had drawn The secretary of state draws the numbers—now of course they rotate—but they draw the numbers of the placement on the ballot I was on the bottom with the first which meant that the top and the bottom are the most desirable places when you have seventeen names All of a sudden someone comes up and says "Uh oh We have another week for the drawing Well all of a sudden this guy jumps out of nowhere and he s put on the bottom of the ballot

YATES Who was this?

BERGESON And this was Well let me

YATES OK Sorry Go ahead [Laughter]

BERGESON We just didn t know who he was He had never been heard of So we went through the campaign There was a name on there his name was

[James B] Jim Slemons who was a car dealer He came from a very reputable family kind of pillars of the community that owned a Mercedes dealership And he d sort of been the kind of guy that was always kind of looking for a way to identify himself I remember him talking to me at one time about running for the school board He didn t like to give speeches he didn t like to be in the public [eye] so I figured you know this fellow is going to have a hard time getting into politics because you don t get elected if you don t like to go out and make speeches

We went through the campaign and I mean we did everything We walked precincts we worked very hard—everything that you re supposed to do Went around and made speeches All the debates A clean campaign It was the cleanest campaign We knew that Slemons was out there because we kept hearing these things We kept seeing some of the mailings he was putting out The theme was She s a nice lady but she s a spender and that was sort of the insidious They were building on this that I was a spender because I had been on the school board We started seeing some of the pieces that they were putting out and they were pretty bad I mean they were And I wasn t quite used to this and I thought "Well you know I m going to keep the high road I m not going to do anything to go out and attack him

Well it so happens that his wife [Anna Slemons] was a Penthouse model and most of the people knew this in Newport Beach but it was not

going to be the kind of thing that we wanted to use in a campaign. We just thought it wasn't. In fact, they were known to have some pretty raucous parties, kind of on the kinky side. You know, strange things. He showed porno films to some of his employees. These were all things that were kind of common knowledge, but not the sort of thing that I wanted to become involved with as far as exposure of that type.

YATES A counterattack

BERGESON Yeah. And so we got through the campaign, and lo and behold, Everybody had already congratulated me and we lost by fifteen hundred votes. And it just so happened that was the same number of votes that this fellow on the bottom of the ballot had been able to pick up—fifteen hundred—just because he was on the bottom. Nobody saw him or heard from him since then. Well, of course, I was very disenchanted. I mean, it was heartbreaking because we had done everything right. I felt it was a personally involved campaign with lots of volunteers, we energized, we had precinct organizations, had really worked the precincts. I remember James, our youngest son, came in. He was seventeen, sixteen, seventeen. Just turned seventeen. And he said, "Mom, I learned something from this election." And I said, "What was it, James?" He said, "If you have enough money you can buy anything. That's kind of cynical for a kid that age." [Laughter] I hated to have him so turned off the government process. So that made me kind of angry. It's wrong. He never put in a

campaign appearance but he had sent out all these mailings put \$200 000 into the last two weeks of the campaign not so much in Newport because everybody knew him and knew me here but in some of the areas

YATES That were part of the district

BERGESON Part of the district And they had a baby in the picture which they had just adopted from Mexico City And they had he and his wife in the baby picture and how this loving family that they presented on pink stationery with his wife Anna who had written to the Leisure World contingent about how we needed a conservative woman We thought that this was so I mean it s so schmaltzy nobody will ever believe it Well they did So I lost the election

YATES The primary

BERGESON Pardon?

YATES You were talking about the primary at first Right?

BERGESON This was the primary

YATES Right

BERGESON Right In fact I ll explain how I can lose the same election twice

[Laughter] But he went up to Sacramento I guess he bought a river boat Everybody was looking forward to having Anna up there because she was really something Then he sailed out to go back to Sweden [to see] her family She was from Sweden [They] went back there Returning they were stopped at customs and picked up for all this pornographic material

that he was bringing trying to smuggle into the country that he picked up in Sweden And so of course this hit the newspapers and the headlines all over The Republican nominee is picked up for bringing in pornographic materials " And he s their nominee what do they do? And we had a deadline to meet which was I think Oh I can t remember the date but it was very close near the time of filing

YATES So roughly then what time was this that he did this? This was during the summer? Was it not long after the primary?

BERGESON Let s see the primary would have been in June So it must have been probably July or August

YATES OK but just prior to another deadline?

BERGESON Yeah right The deadline And so I remember I had gone to work briefly for a management consulting education firm and I was participating in a forum we were presenting a forum on decision making analysis which was in Claremont I ll never forget it because I started getting these calls You ve got to put in for a write in I said No way '

YATES Who was calling you?

BERGESON I was getting calls from everybody I mean they were just coming in every ten minutes You ve got to do this And then this one person Lynn Turner she s deceased now but she was president of one of the GOP clubs and then several others who had called and said they had contributions They were ready to go out and work for me if I would consider a write in

campaign Well here I am thinking you know why would I want to do this? Write in campaigns are rarely ever successful and here you've got a very short time They said Just come down to the registrar of voters and we'll talk about it Give us some time ' because the time was five o'clock So five minutes to five we went in They had the petitions all signed everything for me to do I thought Well you know And it was the toughest decision I Well I've had a few but that was one of the tougher ones And so we went in I put it in I told her Well you hold this until tomorrow morning because I've got to sleep on this I'd just as soon that it not be sanctified until I've had a chance to go through this in my own mind Well of course in the morning paper all over the headlines 'Bergeson takes write in campaign to voters

YATES There went your attempt to

BERGESON Yeah there went my attempts to try to reconcile So I mean we were in it We worked within a period of twelve fifteen days Anyway a very short time line We had over two thousand volunteers It was absolutely the most fantastic campaign and people just came together I mean it was because this guy was an embarrassment And we actually had the Lincoln Club and we had the majority of the party people behind us But the opposition was able to get a letter from Ronald [W] Reagan to support the nominee

YATES I saw that in your scrapbook material

BERGESON And didn't realize you know that that had gone on in California So that went out just prior which we know had an effect I mean obviously you know with the tremendous respect that everybody had for President Reagan Was he president?

YATES No he wasn't president yet

BERGESON He wasn't president then no but very well respected He was kind of the guru of the party at that time

YATES I'm trying to think Oh right He was being seriously considered I think for a nomination

BERGESON I know I was a delegate when he was a presidential nominee so I know it was before that

YATES Right right

BERGESON But anyway we lost It was the most successful write in campaign that has ever been initiated Of course it meant that a Democrat was elected

YATES And I wanted to ask about that because obviously I saw in the headlines that there were accusations because you made this decision to be a write in candidate but this set up this scenario so a Democrat could win

BERGESON Oh yes I mean people were furious They were gnashing their teeth It was "How could a Democrat represent the most Republican district in the state of California?"

YATES What do you think happened? Do you feel responsible in any way for

being a write in candidate and taking away votes?

BERGESON I actually thought that we could win the race And I really think had that [Reagan] letter not gone out I think we could have won that race I think there were enough that were ready to go with us and just kind of held back on that [Ronald] Ron Cordova was a very conservative Democrat and he had a pretty strong I think people that were turned off by Slemons could go either way and probably the people felt Well better to have somebody that they know is going to be elected rather than Slemons who they were afraid could be elected So they were kind of wavering at that point but it was a fantastic campaign

The elements of that campaign were the ones that went on to work for Ron Packard s and he as you know had a write in campaign for Congress And much of the leadership of that campaign actually went on they learned enough through my campaign to be successful But the fact that they were successful in the congressional campaign I really think that we could have been in mine as well had not that letter for Slemons and the people fearing that if Slemons were elected that it would be a disaster He would be there forever

But it was surprising because after that I think when the dust finally settled everyone said We know that we are not going to keep a Democrat there In fact a lot of people said even if we have a Democrat it s better than having that guy there we can get rid of him in two years

Of course Ron Cordova knowing that he was going to be short term decided to run for the senate the next year And so that s why we had the organization all in place

YATES Right because not that much time passed

BERGESON And I immediately declared for the assembly and so we built from there

YATES I see

BERGESON And then I had another character who entered—his name is Lee Watkins—who ended up in Arizona as part of the He eventually went to jail for threatening He was one of those that worked on Slemmons' campaign He said that he had information that he was going to use against me—he took this to some of the people on my campaign—that was going to show that I was a prostitute in Texas [Laughter] And of course the political consultants didn t have anything to do with him I mean they just dropped him

YATES Yeah he was too out of control

BERGESON Yeah He was totally out of control and with that he lost most of his base of support during the next election so then I was successful in '78

YATES Well in this first election in '76 you talked about getting support of the business community which was primarily male at that point I assume Now what role did the local Republican party clubs or organizations play in your campaign?

BERGESON They were very supportive There were some elements within the party

not so much in my area say around Fullerton/north Orange County that were still upset about the write in because they didn't understand a lot of the local politics. You know the newspapers here carried it but they were pretty much removed. And some of those were still concerned but by and large in my district I had major support. I had almost every. In fact I'm very proud of the fact I had Dr. Arnold [O.] Beckman. He was one of those that sanctioned the write in and got behind my campaign and he was co-chairman of my campaign when I ran in '78. I mean a lot of the old guard the [Robert] Bob Beavers and the [Victor] Vic Andrews and people who had great stature within the party.

YATES So they were involved in '76 too?

BERGESON They were involved in my '76 campaign as well. Yeah.

YATES OK. That's what I'm interested in and then obviously how that translates to your next election or campaign.

BERGESON And I still had what I consider to be the real stature of the party behind me and they were very supportive you know raised money for me. To this day I have many very close friends that I made during that period of time. There have always been certain sections within the party but I mean at that time it was pretty solid because I was an incumbent. You know you didn't have a lot of this. Because when you have a lot of primary challenges is where you build more factions within the party because people are running. I mean the nastiest elections you can have

are primaries because of the inter party problems. And that's like your family, you know? You get into squabbles, and some of those can last forever. That's the primary difference between the party in those days a few years ago and the party that we have now where I think where we're trying to draw back together. But I think the Republicans at that time were far more unified.

YATES: During the '70s?

BERGESON: Uh, huh. And see, we're coming out of Watergate, too. And that's when, as I indicated, there were more Democrat officeholders in Orange County than there were Republicans because the Watergate episode had badly damaged the Republican party. In fact, when Bob Badham, One of the reasons that he wanted to leave the assembly was [because] they couldn't even hold a two-thirds majority. There was no function at all. You can't be an effective player when you have no role to play.

YATES: Well, in either this the '76 election or the '78 election, what, if any connection was there with the Republican Caucus up at the state legislature in terms of interest in your race? And support?

BERGESON: There was a great deal of interest. I remember meeting with Doug Watt who was the chief of staff for [Robert G.] Bob Beverly, who was then the minority leader. And then I had known Bruce Nestande, he had been a friend of mine. I got to know him, and he was helping. Paul Priolo was helping. At that time, I think Bob Beverly was running for the senate, so I

think he left the assembly then But I had a lot of help through the caucus And they you know offered to find management for me So I really worked very well I think See this was before the Prop 13 babies They came along with me I mean I was one of those that got elected in 1978 I think there were—I can't remember the exact number—sixteen or seventeen new Republican assembly people that were elected When I first ran there were four women that were running as Republicans That was in '76

YATES For the assembly?

BERGESON In the assembly And that was Marilyn Ryan who I still see We're still very close friends Carol Hallett who I don't see [Laughter] She was the one who kind of did it in to the other women Republicans and I think I mentioned this And Jean Moorhead who is now a Democrat And that was primarily because of some of the leadership battles that we had when we were elected which occurred in '78 after I had been elected but

YATES But we'll get to that?

BERGESON The three of them were elected and I was No Jean Moorhead came in with me But both Marilyn

YATES As a Republican? She changed parties later

BERGESON Yeah She and I were elected the same year And then Marilyn and Carol were both elected and they were sort of re-entries into the Republican Caucus A number of years ago there were more Republican women in

the assembly. There weren't any at the time that Marilyn and Carol were elected. There were several Democrat women—and they were few—but there were at least Democrat women there.

YATES: Right. Well, we're getting towards the end. If this is OK, why don't we stop here and then, barring if there's some things I've forgotten, we'll come back to the '78 election and maybe get more into describing the demographics of the district. Some of this has come out, but maybe we can just focus on that and also campaign strategies, if they differed from the '76 election. What you learned from that experience. How does that sound?

BERGESON: Sounds fine.

YATES: Great.

BERGESON: Great.

[End Tape 2 Side B]

[Session 3 May 23 2000]

[Begin Tape 3 Side A]

YATES So by the end of the last time that we met we really talked I think in depth about your 1976 write in campaign for the assembly seat and that was for the Seventy fourth District And so I thought today we could start by focusing on your 1978 campaign for the same seat I didn't ask you this last time but maybe to start you could describe the district demographically geographically however you think it's significant

BERGESON Well it was a district that was primarily a suburban district Newport Beach Irvine Mission Viejo I think there was a portion of Costa Mesa But it was primarily a suburban fast growing new district Predominately Republican In fact it's probably one of the most Republican districts in the world [Laughter] It's the most Republican assembly district I think in California And of course because of the high concentration it's considered a very safe Republican district So for all purposes the winner of the primary would go on to be successful in the general election

YATES Well is that why it was surprising that Cordova won? Cordova Do I

have the right name?

BERGESON Ron Cordova won by virtue of the campaign that I launched as a write in candidate. There were two Republicans and the vote was split.

YATES Right and the circumstances. And you also mentioned the post Watergate. You thought that that might have had an impact also.

BERGESON There was to some extent more in '72 and '74. Seventy six of course I think that had I won the primary there would have been no question. I would have been elected.

YATES OK.

BERGESON And had I not launched the write in campaign I think Jim Slemons would have been elected. But as it was we split the vote. In '78 there were not as many candidates. There was one who was viewed as a threat simply because he hired the same firm who was successful in the Jim Slemons campaign. His name is Lee Watkins and he was a real character. In fact his methods of campaigning became so difficult to deal with his management finally dumped him.

YATES Well I remember you did mention a little bit about the prostitution [Laughter]

BERGESON Well this is the gentleman—I use the term loosely—who went on to get into great difficulties when he moved to Arizona. I believe he was in the administration. He was actually I think found guilty of some rather serious charges at the time that they had the problems with the

administration but it was several years later

YATES So he was your strongest opponent though in '78?

BERGESON Yeah. He was virtually the only opponent that I had and I was successful. This was the year that Prop. 13 was on the ballot.

YATES Right.

BERGESON And probably the most difficult decision I ever had to make was whether to support Prop. 13. Being a school board member and very interested in maintaining local control, realizing that Prop. 13 would give a great deal more authority to the state but the political reality was I would not be elected if I had not supported Prop. 13. It was very clear everything showed that. And I think it's the one time that I had to deviate from what I considered to be my long standing role of principle over politics. I remember my campaign manager sat me down and he said, 'Marian, do you want to win this election?' And I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You're going to have to support Prop. 13.' And I could see the rationale in that there was a huge budget surplus in the state and it made a lot of sense that there needed to be some safeguards. I knew a number of seniors that were being priced out of their homes by the increasing taxes because the assessed valuation was going up at such a rapid rate. These were people who had bought with limited incomes and were being priced out of their homes. And so I thought there was strong rationale for preserving home ownership by allowing people to continue living in their homes without

being forced out with high taxes. So it was a dichotomy because of my strong belief in local control and what we needed to do to have a sound and a well controlled school district which I had been a part of. I felt we also had been dealing with the Serrano decision which had another impact on schools which is equalization.

YATES Right

BERGESON So in a sense Prop 13 really exacerbated the Serrano [decision] causing it to be put into force earlier simply because it then allowed the state greater discretion as far as allocating all funds but as we know so well that local control was virtually eliminated.

YATES Right Well one of the ironies of Prop 13 is I think of course the idea that you're supposedly giving more to the individual homeowner at the same time you're losing local control. And also my understanding of Prop 13 is it greatly benefited businesses too. It was a little bit misleading in that sense.

BERGESON Of course at a time when we needed to have energy fueled into

YATES And I do mean big business

BERGESON economic development. But it's true. It advantaged the certain numbers who had seen massive increases in their benefits and yet were allowed the opportunity of a lower tax. And of course that still continues but there are many of us who would not be able to live in our homes if we had not that advantage. I guess the good news is that we'll

all eventually die off and then I think that those advantages will be lost because the property of course will

YATES Well yes And that s the other irony is that

BERGESON then be reassessed at its fair market value yeah

YATES Yeah that anybody new coming in of course is paying in an astronomical amount

BERGESON And that I think is you know something that I think will eventually be justified The area perhaps that has held its validity is the fact that it s knowing what you re assessment is going to be In other words it s predictable and when you buy your home you know what your taxes are I think before Prop 13 you could have your taxes increased you know 5[00]or 600 percent and have no control over that And of course that meant that many people foreclosed just to pay taxes or they had to move out find other housing

YATES Well I want to come back to talking a little bit about the district but let me ask you at what point in the campaign did you have this discussion about coming out and supporting Prop 13?

BERGESON It was probably about six weeks prior to the election

YATES To the primary?

BERGESON Uh huh

YATES Right because the Prop 13 was on the June ballot

BERGESON And of course that s where the opposition would have surfaced of

course—in the primary I won substantially and of course I had the full backing and support of the community I had endorsements from virtually all of the interest groups and a lot of volunteer support Much of what we had developed through the write in continued through the next election And these were all strong Republicans So I had full backing as far as the Republican party where there was some concern of that perhaps having split the party But I think it was pretty well known that the heir apparent the one that won the primary That the district would not have been well served that there would not have been very effective representation So the obvious conclusion was that he was a short termmer The Democrat obviously knew that there was no way in the next election that he would survive

YATES This is Ron Cordova?

BERGESON Uh huh

YATES Well another question about your district—I was asking some of this because I hope we can talk about it [more] later on and how the districts changed—but what about ethnic makeup at that point?

BERGESON This was virtually an all white district with very little minority population There may have been a small number of Asians at that time but it was virtually an all white population

YATES OK Now you may have answered this last time but I ll ask you again when exactly did you decide that you were going to run again?

BERGESON I think it was at the time that we lost I think I made the announcement virtually at that point that we would have the district back at the next election and because our campaign was already in full gear we had good organization both from fund raising as well as volunteer And so it seemed a natural then to just initiate a campaign right at that point so I announced virtually about the same time right after the general election

YATES OK And why did you want to run?

BERGESON Probably the competitive spirit set in We had worked so hard and it seemed that it reached great prominence as far as the ability to generate that much interest In ten or twelve days we were able to get some forty thousand write in votes I believe I can't remember the exact number it was about that ¹ Write in votes And a name that was difficult My name is not the easiest name to carry to the ballot box with you But I think there was a lot of energy that went into that and a lot of encouragement and those who had worked on the campaign felt that you know there was no way we're going to give up at this point

YATES What was different if anything about that campaign versus the first one?

BERGESON It was very similar when it started out knowing that you had a very effective management at being able to develop a campaign that relied primarily on attack mechanisms and the difficulty of trying to defend

¹ The final vote was 34 860 write in votes for Bergeson in the 1976 general election

against a campaign of that type. But I think the candidate discredited himself so badly that all of his credibility was lost and that you know made it easier so that the campaign managers actually felt he was too hot to handle.

YATES: When you say attack methods, now are you talking about your campaign or this other person?

BERGESON: No, no. In fact, in the first campaign, we refused to utilize the information that we had as far as the opponent, feeling that it was not the kind of campaign that I wanted to personally involve myself with. And the second was the same way. We were taking the high road. Volunteers were concerned about issues that were important to the district and the opposition attack was simply to find a way of discrediting or trying to ruin my credibility.

YATES: So how did you counter that?

BERGESON: Well, at first, of course, we just continued to build the support. I mean with lots and lots of endorsements. We had endorsements that reflected almost, as I say, every interest group. And just building a strong level of support to try to cut off any fund-raising ability, because unlike the first candidate, who had money of his own through his family, this candidate did not have any money and so was not able to energize any fund-raising. So it was strictly an attack campaign of which every effort was made to try to reduce the support that I had, thinking that I was someone the

people wouldn't want to support. And that's where, as I mentioned, the type of tactic that he used where I had actually been involved in prostitution in Texas.

YATES: That doesn't seem very effective [Laughter]. Well, you mentioned interest groups and maybe you could just elaborate on what you mean or who the interest groups were.

BERGESON: There were certain endorsements everyone seeks in a community which are considered to be, not necessarily the power brokers, but the people that are viewed as those having influence. And those endorsements were secured: city council members, the Board of Supervisors, local endorsements of elected officials, as well as senior citizen groups, education groups. Everywhere that there was an opportunity to meet, I sat down and met with them. We had numbers of coffees, afternoon meetings, meetings with school people, every avenue that was available. I spent full time walking precincts. My family walked precincts. So it was a full-on volunteer effort.

YATES: What about forums? Were there ever any?

BERGESON: Forums? Uh, huh. Oftentimes, my opponent never showed up, you know, so I had an opportunity to be able to express what I felt were important things for the district. I think I probably concentrated a lot on education issues because it was an interest, but yet there were a lot of negative feelings about education, too. So I think trying to get involved with

some of the current issues coming into a new era of collective bargaining adversarial relationships that could be developed between management and teachers And of course having been a teacher and considering a highly professional role for teachers I think that these were issues that I could address effectively having worked on the Board of Education and I had always had a good relationship with both sides and trying to work to bring about better understanding and consensus building

YATES Well at a forum for example I take it you would give a presentation and then there would be questions and answers and what kind of questions were you being asked about let s say education?

BERGESON Well of course abortion was a big issue in those days A lot of what we consider litmus test issues I was pro life so this was not a difficult issue for me to address I think sometimes it s difficult knowing whether or not you re pro life enough because I felt there should be some exceptions and that you know to some of the strong proponents of pro life this was not acceptable to them But I was very honest about my position and I had always supported family planning and obviously that didn t always set well with some of the conservative groups But I think I generally had good support from conservatives though maybe not some of what I would consider to be the ultra conservatives of which my opponent was trying to pick up in that case But I think generally I covered most all those areas in a way that I felt I was honest with my true beliefs and feelings at the

same time willing to sit down and recognize that we had always a mind toward discussing you know issues that were of interest to people

YATES Would people ask you about your stance on Prop 13?

BERGESON Oh that was the big issue That was the big issue

YATES And what kind of questions? Do you remember what they asked you?

BERGESON Well the questions were of course I mean it was strongly supported I mean there was very very little opposition to Prop 13 at that time It was very strongly supported And it s true I would not have won the election had I not That was the era of the Prop 13 babies and everyone that was elected was a strong proponent of Prop 13 So I think there was a very strong anti government feeling particularly in this area with Proposition 20 which was the Coastal Protection Act

YATES Right

BERGESON That property values skyrocketed and that became I mean everybody was seeing the effect of huge increases in their taxes And of course you found a lot of the seniors particularly more affected where they had bought homes to be in a retirement era and you know at one time a lot of these communities on the coast were considered retirement There were mobile home parks and places where people would come because the weather was great there wasn t a lot of industry here and so you know it wasn t a reason to move your businesses here So there were a lot of seniors who were retired who were very concerned about what would

happen if they were priced out of their homes through the increase in taxes the exorbitant increases So I think that the timing was particularly for this area that it was a major major issue

YATES Any other issues that you can think of that stand out to you at that point?

BERGESON Well as I say getting back to a lot of the hot button issues of course were the abortion Gun control I don't think gun control was quite as much of an issue maybe as it is today but that again was one The National Rifle Association You know I generally felt people should be able to defend themselves I didn't have any problem [with that] That was before assault weapons and a lot of the issues that I think became much more controversial But it was one of those that came up whether people had the right to defend themselves and I felt they did I didn't think they should have bazookas in their garage but I did think that it was quite appropriate for people to be able to have possession of firearms for purposes of recreation and self defense

But those were the hot button issues and the others of course were economic concerns on how we continue to provide for jobs in the economy I guess it was prior to the time that huge inflation set in I believe that was in the later 70s But we were starting to see the effects of inflation and that's the reason one of the first bills I introduced which we're not discussing yet was income tax indexing because at that time one of the campaign promises I made was that I would address the

problems of being pushed into a higher income tax bracket just by virtue of a cost of living increase

YATES OK Let s see There was something else that just slipped my mind Oh once you won the primary election in June what if anything changed in terms of your strategy for campaigning between then and the fall election?

BERGESON Well there wasn t much of a campaign We had a few ads ran endorsements and I may have had a mailing But it was felt that at that point that I In fact I can t recall any of the Democrat candidates that I ve run against because there

YATES I actually do have the list here but I know they didn t have a strong Hold on a second I have the name of the person

BERGESON There was usually a Democrat candidate there you know They were kind of token because they realized that the odds were so strong

YATES It was John C Harrison

BERGESON Yeah Oh no one knew who I had forgotten about him

YATES Here s the list of the primary and then here s the general¹ if you want to look at it

BERGESON We had never seen him His named sounded like You know oftentimes you identify people by the sound of the name Well all of a sudden they had finally found him and they had a picture of him and he had this long hair and long scraggly beard and he looked like he just

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came out of the mountains I don't mean to be uncharitable because he probably was a very nice man but here was his picture on the front page and of course they had a picture of me perfectly coiffed [Laughter] in Newport Beach and Irvine and Leisure World and the places where I was running So I remember my husband came in and he said Here's your competition [Laughter]

YATES Right

BERGESON So at that time I was not particularly fearful that he was going to be able to pick up that many serious votes [James M.] Jim Parker I do remember I remember the names now that they're here but it really was not a very tight election at that point I think we were just pretty much I did represent Oceanside and that was the part of the district I think that there was somewhat of a I mean it was not the same population There were a lot of mobile home parks There were actually a lot of mobile home parks throughout the district but Oceanside did have a minority population and it was considerably different But I spent a lot of time in Oceanside because of that and I think that was One of the reasons is I wanted to show that I did understand their concerns In fact I worked very closely with the city council in Oceanside and we were able to get them some consideration legislatively as well as budget appropriations at the time I was their representative

YATES So that was the one part of the district that maybe didn't fit the same

BERGESON Of course it was a different county And it was difficult even then to try to work with the different counties because you're working with different county jurisdictions I know one time when I was in the senate I had four counties So I've always had a very diverse group to work with as far as the geographical representation

YATES Well you mentioned a few moments ago about your family being involved in the campaign and I did want to ask you a little bit about your family's participation and support First of all how did they feel about your running?

BERGESON Well I think they were kind of intrigued by it frankly Of course the kids were largely grown then I think my son was a senior in high school

YATES When you won the [primary] election right?

BERGESON Yeah and then when I finally won I think he was in college at that time So they were pretty much gone My husband had always put up with my independence anyway because I had always been involved in a million things and never really spent that much time being a housewife if you will Family was very important but I felt that there were ways you could serve your family with working with school groups and other community organizations to try to make the community better I felt if it's good for my child certainly it's good for other people's kids And so I think that with the support that they were able to give And then whatever time they had they also worked on the campaign and spread literature and

walked precincts and you know did that sort of thing And people were always impressed when my husband would go out and say 'I want you to support my wife " And they'd say You're out campaigning for your wife? You know that kind of surprised look So I think he enjoyed that As I said he has had the opportunity of meeting some wonderful people through my political involvement and I think that support has been very important

YATES Well of course the difference here is now you're physically in another location and I was wondering how concerned you were about that? You had one son at home right?

BERGESON Yeah well he was pretty much gone by then I think he had graduated from high school When I ran in the first primary he was still at home

YATES Right

BERGESON That was in '76 and then I think he graduated in Let's see

YATES Did he graduate in '79?

BERGESON I think it was '79

YATES So you would have gone up in December [1978] or January of '79

BERGESON In fact he went to Stanford [University] so we were actually closer up there You know it is a family sacrifice I mean there's no way that you can say that with the time and the emotional attachment that you have to have physically I mean it's all consuming in a sense It would be difficult if not impossible for me to do it with younger children Some

may handle it and do very well but in my particular circumstance I mean because so much of our time was spent at our children's activities and I would have missed that terribly if I couldn't have attended all the swim meets and the events and the school activities that the kids had I was busy but I was always available for their activities

When you move to Sacramento you're on a commute on weekends generally And I always came home every weekend I never missed a weekend at home But you know I mean the communication level was always good We always spoke at least once a day as far as getting caught up on what was going on My husband would always come to Sacramento if there were events that needed to be attended It was nice to have an escort or a spouse

But there's no question that you know Sacramento is a lonely place in the evenings It used to be rather depressing for me to go around town and see people sitting over at the bar I'd think what a terrible way of life to have to spend every evening without having a family to go home to But I always had plenty to do because I'd go home with my agenda for the next day and I always had a lot more to take home than I had time in order to take care of all the reading that was necessary

YATES

Well what did you do to set yourself up in Sacramento? You'd won the election I believe it's early December right that you get sworn in? Or is that January?

BERGESON Yeah I remember when I was sworn in the whole family came up In fact we had our entire kitchen cabinet if you will—the people that worked on the campaign and anyone else that I mean we loved to have them up So we had a large group of people that came up for swearing in as well as a reception that we had at one of the hotels in Sacramento And it was raining Well after everybody went home then I had to find a place to live and we were looking around I found a place at Governor s Square which are apartments They are sort of condo apartments Nice places They were very nice

YATES I m trying to remember Where is that? Do you remember the location?

BERGESON It s on L [Street] between L and N Street and it s about 4th [Street] or 5th [Street] In that general area

YATES So you re close

BERGESON A lot of legislators moved into that area because if you wanted to buy you wanted to live there awhile to find out where you d like to live to find out proximity and what kind of access you d be able to maintain with your events and where you needed to be So it was great If you wanted to you could walk to your office in the capitol

I remember that night coming out of the capitol garage—of course we had the opportunity of parking in the capitol garage You have a little pool car that you can use to get back and forth but we were still in our family car that Garth drove up in and we were pulling out and thinking

This is kind of a wet world. What do I need? And the only thing I could think of was a heating blanket. I was very cold. So that's all I had. All my worldly possessions were within that heating blanket, but I slept very well that night. I stayed up there for a couple of days and got the necessary things, and then we drove back home and then Garth drove me up in January. We brought one of everything [Laughter]

YATES: So you were located at this apartment?

BERGESON: At the Governor's Square, yeah.

YATES: Well, describe what your first few days were like once you came up in January.

BERGESON: It was the strangest feeling because I remember sitting at the desk. There wasn't a thing on my desk. Nothing in the room. No books except for the education codes. And I had already hired my secretaries, and they were sitting out front, and we're all sitting there wondering, you know, what do we do now? I think of Robert Redford in The Candidate, you know? You think, now you're elected, now what do you do? Because it's overwhelming when you suddenly realize, well, here you are. Now you start to work. What do you do because there's no job description. I mean, that's the thing about being a legislator, you can do anything you want. You have a complete blank sheet that they give you, and you can fill it in with as little or as much, whatever your desire is, as long as you can go back and tell the voters so they'll re-elect you. So everything was kind of

calibrated Now how do you show people that you re worth the investment that they made with their vote to get you up there?

So I looked out I had a very nice view out of the window I always managed to have a window view which was very nice but very small offices

YATES Well on a practical level how did you get your office? Or how do you get assigned an office?

BERGESON You get assigned by virtue of where they want to put you In the assembly it was controlled pretty much by the Rules Committee and new incoming legislators of course would get whatever offices were left And offices became the pecking order You know once you would have seniority or certain linkages or whatever you could move through But my office was small but nice I actually had a view of the capitol garden so I liked that I remember sitting there looking out again and just feeling the wonder of where you were and

YATES It all sort of sinks in at that point?

BERGESON And you just have that overwhelming I mean it s an excitement At the same time kind of you know how do I go about this? What s the process? So I hired my staff One thing I have always prided myself in is having very very strong staff I didn t hire a lot of the people that were in my campaign simply because I felt that I was really looking for expertise in certain areas and I knew that education was probably going to be a

strong area for me and I wanted to make sure that I had people that you know were skilled in being able to understand legislation and at the same time be proficient in drafting what we needed. Much of what a legislator does is delegated as far as the actual drafting. Of course the approval and everything has to go through the office but I mean because there are so many areas you need to have specialists in every area to be able to depend upon.

YATES: Well, how did you identify people to have as your staff if you weren't using people that you knew from down here?

BERGESON: They were people that were recommended to me. I met my chief of staff when she was chief of staff for Ron Cordova and she was located in my district office.

YATES: Oh, OK.

BERGESON: And I had dealt with Ron Cordova's office and always found him very agreeable and thought he had the best staff I'd ever been.

YATES: What was her name?

BERGESON: Julie Froeberg.

YATES: Oh, I saw her name.

BERGESON: And she's now Julie Puentes who's with the OC [Orange County] Business Council. All of my staff have gone on to much greater things. They've done very well. I am very proud of them.

YATES: But she was originally with Ron Cordova's staff?

BERGESON She was with Ron Cordova and so I hired her as my chief of staff She did a lot of the recruiting and you know I did the interviewing But she would seek out people and because she was what I considered to be extremely competent could be helpful in being able to screen through applications We managed to find very very talented people to fill a lot of these disciplines We had health services and we had education and we had—because I was interested in it—transportation which gets into the committee assignments But where I had committee assignments or strong responsibility areas I tried to find an expert in those areas who could be really successful in being able to get good information and being able to go through all the research material and so forth to be able to synthesize it and get it to me in executive summary forms

YATES Right Out of curiosity how many people did you have on your staff at least initially?

BERGESON Initially let s see In the capitol I only had two I had a legislative secretary and then another secretary managed to The secretary who started as my appointments and kind of my general secretary was still with me as my administrative assistant when I left the governor s office and in fact Gary Hart hired her and [Susan K] Sue Burr hired her Everybody wants her Fantastic And she was nineteen years old when I hired her

YATES Oh I see

BERGESON I did that again with other staff members In fact Marilyn Ryan who

was one of those that was elected at the same time that I would have been in '76 and then she was re-elected of course in '78. And she became somewhat of a mentor on hiring and what to do and where to shop and where to eat. And she and I are still good friends. In fact, I'm having lunch with her next week. We try to get together quite often. But she consulted her staff who had been there a long time. Because there was a complete change because there were seventeen Prop 13 babies that were elected.

YATES I need to check the numbers but I remember you saying

BERGESON There was a huge turnover so there were a lot of staff available and the question was finding out which of those were really good capable staff. And so with her secretary's help we were able to get Chris and Susie. That's Chris Williams and Susie Harrison. And they were my secretaries. That's all I had.

YATES Which was the one that stayed with you?

BERGESON Susie

YATES Susie. What was her name again?

BERGESON [Susan] Susie Harrison

YATES Harrison

BERGESON Most of the work was actually done in the district office because we wanted to keep the proximity and the flow of information at the district level and that was where I really focused. That's where I spent a lot of

time in the district. In fact, I flew home often during the week, you know, for various functions, meetings, and getting together. A number of my bills actually came from groups that presented ideas to me, even student groups. We had student groups that presented ideas that we would consider and discuss, you know, and then eventually if they made good sense and

YATES Evolve into a bill you would carry

BERGESON Yeah

YATES You mentioned the feeling of showing up and being there and there's no job description. But you also mentioned Marilyn Ryan and obviously you got some guidance from her, but I was wondering if you could elaborate on how you did become oriented towards being there initially. From the Republican Caucus, was there any help? Was there any formal kind of orientation, that kind of thing?

BERGESON We did have orientation and I think it was helpful. It was on the process and it was mainly what you have to do with your legislation—more procedures than anything. And then, of course, the Republican Caucus provided the philosophy, and I wasn't sure that I fit into this.

YATES Really?

BERGESON That was kind of a problem for me, frankly, because I had visions of what I wanted to do, you know? My bills. Well, it became very programmed in the caucus because we had seventeen new Republicans that were going

to shape the world. In fact, they didn't want to have the consultants that were brought in for the orientation. They wanted Howard Jarvis to come in and that was their desire. They felt this is what the world is going to look like. I recoiled somewhat from that feeling that you know I'm a Republican and I view Republican principles in a way that I was probably a Republican longer than most of them had been born. I wasn't that old at that time. That was I don't know how many years ago but I'd considered myself as good a Republican as anyone.

YATES: Well, help me understand. I'm sorry to interrupt you for a second. When you say that the powers that be, I guess in the Republican Caucus at the time wanted to bring Howard Jarvis in, what does that mean exactly?

BERGESON: Well, it meant that when the orientation was set up, I mean, there were some members of the Republican Caucus who felt that this was business as usual and that it was now a new world under Prop 13 and a view of government now in a more negative way and that someone like Howard Jarvis would be far better in being able to set the pace or the vision for the Republican party because the orientation was done pretty much on a bipartisan basis. We had meetings with the Department of Finance. I mean, we had information from the Department of Finance and from the legislative counsel and from the legislative analyst. You know everybody knew how their role fit into the legislative process and so

when it came to the programming which was primarily technical but nevertheless felt that this was the way things were being done Now we needed to find a new thrust to government

YATES But you said you didn't feel like you fit into that mold?

BERGESON I just sort of felt that you know Howard Jarvis probably was great in what he championed but I felt the view of the future was far beyond tax reduction If government is to provide a service how do we provide that service in a way that makes sense and is fiscally responsible and accountable to the tax payers? Let's have government work not destroy it as such What government must do let's see that it does right

YATES Well who at that point did you start to gravitate towards or form relationships in terms of your colleagues in the assembly? And I'm thinking the caucus as well as others

BERGESON Marilyn Ryan of course was a good personal friend of mine And [William R.] Bill Leonard I always got along well with Bill Leonard [David G.] Dave Kelley [William H.] Bill Lancaster I'm trying to remember who This goes back a long ways Because of my strong involvement with the district I didn't involve myself a lot with other Republicans For one thing being a female in those days was difficult The guys all hung out they didn't really have a lot of involvement with the women legislators If I wanted to go out to dinner or some place it would be with Jean Moorhead and Marilyn Carol never really associated

that much with the women

YATES Carol Hallett you're talking about?

BERGESON Yeah It was more Marilyn and Jean and myself That's when we really got into the It was not a caucus We met with women both Democrats and Republicans and we formed kind of a social group where we rotate around a dinner—you know one or the other—at various homes My social life which was not really a social life as such but I mean whatever sociability we had was done primarily with the women legislators

YATES Regardless of party

BERGESON Right and it was a social occasion I mean Sally Tanner Sally actually campaigned for me and she was a Democrat There was just a real bond that I think that we had because there were few of us of course The feeling was that we have a lot in common we just don't mess with things that we know are partisan and so I mean they never came up And then as time went by we had an issue and I believe this was the first year I was in the senate so I don't know whether you want to get into it That's in the legislative caucus and if you want to wait until later That was formed

YATES Well you did get into a topic I was going to bring up later but why don't we talk about it now relating to this women's group? I did see an article in the fall of '78 I believe it was that Hold on a second Yeah it was

in December of '78 and they interviewed I think eleven women legislators and that each person And you were quoted in it too saying that of course your role was to be a legislator not You know you recognized that you were perhaps role models but obviously you represent everyone And there was even some it seemed strong—and again this was a newspaper article—sentiment saying that "We're not going to form a group or not be a voting bloc" which is a different issue But then there was another article in the same month talking about a breakfast group that Leona Egeland formed And so I was wondering how that fit into what you were just talking about—these dinners Is this the same group?

BERGESON It was kind of a transition and yes Another name that I neglected to mention was Rose Ann Vuich who was a senator and she was a great role model She was probably as bipartisan or nonpartisan as any member of the legislature but she came from a very conservative farm community in

YATES Right Dinuba

BERGESON Yeah

YATES And of course you had Diane [E] Watson elected that year

BERGESON Yeah and Diane We all got along great There were no real philosophical problems simply because we didn't let it happen I think we all sort of enjoyed the sociability and there was a fear that if we got into

issues that it could divide the group I remember like Maxine Waters never came to any of the meetings and yet I had a good relationship with Maxine We used to always see her and she was very friendly She knows where she comes from I knew where I came from Sometimes you can understand people better when you have that understanding than people of the same party who have a much more common linkage as far as philosophy You can have greater differences there than you do with people that are really on the other side of most issues But I think that was something that we enjoyed that collegiality

[End Tape 3 Side A]

[Begin Tape 3 Side B]

YATES What about Teresa Hughes because I noticed in the articles she sounded like she didn't even want to talk about a group Did she participate in these?

BERGESON Yeah All of us I think enjoyed the fact that we got along well together and we had a lot of fun at our dinner meetings And then you know issues would come up occasionally and there would be concerns about the fact that people weren't supporting [them] but I mean it was all peripheral And then I think when this really came to some kind of a focus on a specific issue was at the time of insurance for child care facilities And it became such an issue that we thought that we should say this is a women's caucus position

YATES And this is now later on?

BERGESON I had just been elected to senator it was probably in '84

YATES OK

BERGESON And that's when we actually formed a

YATES A group

BERGESON What we considered to be a caucus and agreed then that there would be no positions taken that were not a consensus position of both parties so that we would stay away We would still keep our sociability and we would still depend on that It seemed like that was an issue that everybody could agree on

YATES Regardless of what party you were

BERGESON Regardless of what party Because we weren't able to get adequate child care because the insurance was so high and they wouldn't even give insurance you know to a lot of these facilities And so areas that I think we because of our own personal experiences or district or whatever And I remember that as being kind of defining issue that really gave a different focus and purpose to the Women's Caucus and

YATES Who carried that piece of legislation?

BERGESON Well that was another thing Senator John Seymour had a bill and the Women's Caucus felt that it should be a woman that was carrying the bill and there was a little friction that went on during that time I can't remember the resolve I think it came out to joint ownership or something

YATES Co authors?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES I was going to ask you something So that provided you said the impetus to form as a more formal group

BERGESON Right

YATES At that point? Then the years that you were in the assembly it basically stayed as more of a sociable

BERGESON Right

YATES But what else did you get out of it in terms of interacting with your fellow members the female legislators?

BERGESON Well I got a commitment from Assemblywoman Gwen Moore—Gwen Moore will never forget this—on the income tax bill ¹

YATES Index?

BERGESON Yeah the indexing bill which was the first bill I introduced because it was a campaign commitment I used a little different strategy I went to the Democrats to get co authors and I went to [Lawrence] Larry Kapiloff who had carried the bill for a number of years and had been unsuccessful in getting it through and became a co author of it So I figured well why not you know line up a list of supporters that I think would probably give me some help with the Democrat controlled legislature and the speaker Leo [T] McCarthy was the speaker at that time and so that was the

1 A B 276 1979 1980 Reg Sess Cal Stat ch 1198 (1979)

beginning of that And then I had the votes to get it out of Well let's see how did this work? We had one of our dinners The bill was coming up before the Appropriations Committee I actually got it out of policy committee Because Jesse [H] Unruh had actually left a meeting and come down to testify on behalf of it

YATES Oh really?

BERGESON Which endeared me to Jesse Unruh forever I thought you know someone that would leave a meeting to come and testify on a bill for a Republican freshman I thought [that] was incredible

YATES He was treasurer at the point correct?

BERGESON Yes Actually came over and testified on behalf of the bill So I had gotten it out of my committee but it was going before the Budget Committee Willie [L] Brown [Jr] hated the bill absolutely hated it he didn't want it Because this was a good way for the state We were in the middle of accelerating inflation You get up to 17 percent inflation and you're going to get a lot of money with the cost of living increase that bumps everybody into a higher tax bracket they pay more taxes And so he did not like the bill and he made it clear that he wasn't going to let the bill get out of the Ways and Means [Committee] where he was chair Well I was at a dinner and Gwen Moore who's You know we were all good friends so I asked her I said Gwen I really need your support on this bill and is there any way you could give me support for I

explained it to her. So she said OK. Well, the bill came up for a vote and somehow without explanation she was gone when the vote was taken. Of course I was crushed because to me, you know, a commitment was a commitment. I just felt I never give a commitment on a bill that I don't feel and I felt people that do that. You know, it's kind of an unwritten law that you do that.

YATES If you make a verbal commitment

BERGESON Yeah

YATES that you vote on the floor?

BERGESON Yeah. And so [John T.] 'Jack' Knox, who was a good friend of mine, he was speaker pro tem and I went to him and I said, Jack. Of course I was naive and young and it was perfectly all right for me to be ignorant because I really was on this. I said, You know, I really feel badly that I should have had the bill out of committee, that there had been, you know, a promise from one of the members. And then I guess there was some effort to see that that vote wasn't provided. And I said, I don't know what to do, and I wanted to withdraw the bill from committee. And I said, I hate to do that, but I said, I'm really lost because I feel a commitment was broken. So anyway, he went to, I guess, the speaker [Leo T. McCarthy] and I don't know what happened. But anyway, Gwen has never gotten over that. Because she did, she finally gave me the vote and we finally got it out of committee. But it was a lot of coercion. She

said she went through so much trouble over that. She never should have made the commitment. I guess. But it was back to that partisan. You know, you have to follow the line because of

YATES Right because of what the caucuses

BERGESON It's the speaker in this case

YATES Right

BERGESON Willie Brown didn't want the bill out of his committee. So that was one of the occasions where I got one of my good colleagues into great difficulty but it caused me probably the greatest success of my entire legislative career. So I constantly thank her for that but she runs every time she sees me and we always have a good time chatting about it.

YATES Well, I'm sorry. I know we keep kind of going back and forth at least chronologically but one of my questions was actually when you first got there what was your initial interaction with Speaker McCarthy?

BERGESON Well, the first thing you do is you make an appointment and you go and talk to them and tell them about the appointments that you'd like to have. And one of the things that the Republicans were able to do was to negotiate the role of the Republican Caucus in determining committee assignments. And Bruce Nestande who was then the caucus leader Paul Priolo was the caucus chairman at that point. I'd known Bruce—he helped me in my campaigns—so I went to them and told them what I wanted—the committees—and they were primarily committee

assignments that were important to the district The Transportation [Committee] was one because we were in a transportation crisis in Orange County so I very much wanted to sit on that committee And then Ag[riculture] and Water [Resources Committee] was another one No wait a minute that was in

YATES I think you're looking at the senate

BERGESON What I'm thinking of is land use resources and

YATES Right Resources Land Use and Energy [Committee] I have

BERGESON Yeah That was an important committee for the assembly

YATES You're looking at a list [of committee assignments] for the record I drew up So for the 79 80 session you received the Education [Committee] and became vice chair and then the Criminal Justice [Committee] and then Resources Land Use and Energy were the standing committees

BERGESON Yeah And of course those were the committees that I wanted and primarily because of Bruce and Paul who were the minority leaders With Education I actually had to interview with Leroy Greene in order to get the vice chairman slot and I've been

YATES I was going to say how unusual would it be for a freshman Republican in a Democratically dominated assembly to get a vice chair position?

BERGESON It would depend a lot Sometimes it was a concession to the minority leader to reward his or her members In this case though Leroy was very particular because education was his bailiwick and he didn't want

anybody that he didn't feel you know was committed like he was And I had known Leroy when I was president of CSBA

YATES Right I remember you mentioning that you'd gotten to know him

BERGESON Yeah And so I you know immediately wanted to get the strength of the vice chairmanship I thought that was very important I think it was unusual to an extent but it was generally considered that it was a plum for a Republican you know to be able to get a vice chairmanship

[I asked for] Criminal Justice just because law and order was a big issue and I found that it was a virtually throw away appointment because I remember I was very unhappy because I wasn't able to get one of my bills out of committee and I went to the speaker who was Leo McCarthy He says You're not supposed to [Laughs] And I suddenly got the picture you were there to make up a quorum but as far as law and order That's when the civil liberties and ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] were in complete Attorneys for criminal justice were in complete charge of the Criminal Justice Committee And so I mean I was there always voting out in every minority I remember Mike Roos was on that committee and Bruce Nestande and you know it was an interesting time I learned a lot

I just remembered there was an effort that I undertook George Deukmejian who was attorney general at that time had an issue that he pushed through and Deputy A G Maureen Higgins who maintained through all the administration was then Let's see Deukmejian was

attorney general under Jerry Brown—I'm trying to remember—because
Jerry Brown was governor then

YATES Right

BERGESON But it was called the Ballard motion¹ which had to do with In rape
cases where they could not use prior cases against women In other
words often times women were disadvantaged because they would bring
up something that happened years ago And Diane Watson and I both
teamed up on that and we were successful in getting the Ballard motion
and I think it was a joint bill that we got chaptered which then eliminated
the use of prior information dealing with other sex crimes or offenses so
that rape was judged simply on the basis of the

YATES And not previous incidences or events in that person's life?

BERGESON Right

YATES That's interesting

BERGESON That was a big one for Criminal Justice I think that's the only thing that I
ever really got through that would be considered a law and order issue out
of a criminal justice committee

YATES Well maybe we could come back to Education for a moment because
obviously that's one of your areas of expertise Talk to me a little bit
about that particular committee first perhaps just talking about Leroy
Greene and his style of chairing the committee

1 S B 500 1979 80 Reg Sess Cal Stat ch 16 (1980)

BERGESON Well Leroy has always been I mean he dominates education issues and it's always been that way As you notice every bill that comes out if it's education is a Leroy F. Greene act and I think Leroy has always been very solicitous of you know taking possession over education issues And I think that sometimes there was some conflict with Gary Hart because Gary also And I think Gary often And I served on the [education] budget subcommittee under Gary Hart who was the chair of that And of course it was always this kind of a battle of who's going to be the chair whether it's going to be Gary or Leroy But I think in Leroy's case we were in the midst of the A B 8¹ which established at that point that education funding then would be based on the revenue limit the combination of funds to you know guarantee that districts would be getting a certain amount of state money And of course with Prop 13 then it was taken They changed the composition so that it became more of the state resources as opposed to local property taxes because

YATES In order to make up the difference?

BERGESON Yeah So that was kind of the bill then that We were all very active and involved in the negotiation

YATES You said that was A B 8

BERGESON That was the original bill that set up the structure after Prop 13 And I remember a number of negotiations with Jerry Brown who was really

1 A B 8 1979 1980 Reg. Sess. Cal. Stat. ch. 282 (1979)

very instrumental in getting an awful lot of detail I mean he'd delegate most of it And John Vasconcellos was a player with that And Leroy of course And the finance director then—I've forgotten his name—in fact he was later convicted Is it [Richard T.] Silberman?

YATES OK

BERGESON Then of course I had come from a district that had been a former high wealth district that had been squozed considerably and damaged I think irreparably as far as a lot of the programs And that had happened to a lot of districts and of course the concern was that we weren't leveling up we were leveling down We were reducing the level of the commitment to education

YATES So what was the goal of A B 8 then?

BERGESON A B 8 was just to set up the response to Prop 13 and set up the funding And then of course that was reversed with the property tax reversal which went on during the Wilson administration which was giving some of it back See what happened is because we had the huge state surplus that went to repay a lot of the programs and so it was taking property tax money and it was back filling the sales tax and other funding And it restructured not so much the amount but the categorization of the funds that went into education because of the revenue limit concept

YATES It sounds like that's a temporary fix though isn't it?

BERGESON Well it was considered to be What I have always found in my legislative

career is this year's solution becomes next year's problem because unless you do it in a basic structural way you know you always are having to re adjust because of the complexity

YATES Yeah the surplus won't be there

BERGESON And the surplus was obviously there because for the first time they had been collecting income tax And so all the income tax revenues because of inflation without indexing had been able to accumulate huge surpluses A lot of the source of funds that we were getting or accumulating were because of the large increases in income tax a lot of it because of higher taxes because people were being pushed into higher brackets

YATES Well explain to me then what with A B 8 was involved in the negotiations on that and trying to get that through?

BERGESON Well you know it was a give and take where you were involved I think Vasconcellos played a pretty heavy role in that I'm trying to remember whether he was chairman of the Budget Committee I believe at that time I'm pretty sure he was chairman of Ways and Means or

YATES I know he was the next session so probably he was Because you went on Ways and Means

BERGESON Yeah

YATES and at that point he was

BERGESON Well I just remember him being in the meetings

YATES Because of the weight of that role of that person who's the chair of Ways

and Means?

BERGESON Right because of the budget And of course through that a lot of your budget system is developed I'm trying to remember other Republicans It was very difficult to get a Republican interested in education

YATES Really?

BERGESON It was almost like doing penance to serve on the Education Committee And the reason for that was that the funding I mean the new members were looking for committees that they could have access to fund raising and that was a high goal You know the more money that goes into the coffers we can elect Republicans and you know that's always The Democrats do the same thing

YATES Sure

BERGESON So you look for access on committees that are going to gain you access to fund raising And of course Education didn't mean anything to most Republicans because it was CTA primarily the unions And so with the unions funding you know And generally they controlled pretty much the membership committee because the Democrats relied heavily on CTA funding and so consequently there were generally those members that were strongly supported by CTA that served on the Education Committee

YATES I was going to say when you say control you mean that they're providing funding to help get people elected?

BERGESON Yeah And oftentimes you know they were put in those interest areas

where they'd like to have an impact on utilizing resources as well

YATES So those people reflect that focus?

BERGESON Yeah And the Education Committee was predominantly supported by strong pro CTA membership Leroy was always I think you know he was always kind of unpredictable Because I do think he was always pretty objective I don't think that he would come down necessarily on one side or the other He always tried to look at what was good education policy And I think to a great extent Gary Hart was the same way I mean many of those that were really in the leadership position you couldn't say well they're a puppet of one group or another because I don't think that was the case

But education was hard for me to sell to my caucus as far as taking positions simply because it was not one of the sexy issues There would be others the Insurance Committee the [senate] Banking [and Commerce] Committee I mean those that generated a lot of business interest for the Republicans generally they were those committees And so I didn't have a lot of competition between Republicans to get on Education Transportation there was because again you're looking at future growth and there was a lot of interest in that you know from the developer interest as well as a lot of the business groups

YATES Well was there any other legislation that you think is important to discuss specifically related to working on the Education Committee?

BERGESON Well the year before I left—this must have been in See I left in 84 probably S B 813 and it was a conference committee for a policy rather than just fiscal issues in education And Gary It was the Hart Hughes and Being the Republican And I think there were six members And on that committee there was myself and John Seymour from the senate—we were the Republicans—and then [Patrick] Pat Johnston Gary Hart Teresa Hughes and I've forgotten who's the other member

YATES Yeah this was an education reform bill is what I

BERGESON This was the big 813 It was a big down payment on the future of education it was considered the omnibus reform bill And we did we spent almost the entire year working on the bill looking at all the issues going through issue by issue And it did some minor changes as far as the school day school year like a couple of minutes or so But then the major components really were it set graduation requirements kids have to have certain units in order to graduate And it really was an effort to try to give more attention then to stronger curriculum requirements And community college was to do away with the basket weaving and to give greater substance courses

The other effort was through the Joint Committee [for the Review of the Master Plan] of Higher Education And I served on that as well but I think that came later in the senate That was at the same time They

were looking at irrelevant courses that were considered academic programs in community colleges. And that's when the state. Well, also with Prop. 13 there was a lot of control taken from community colleges because they were really no longer community because then they were funded at the state level. Then they were starting to look at transfer courses and stronger vocational ed. and that sort of thing. So the state was getting more involved with community colleges at that time too.

YATES: OK. Well, let me go back and ask you kind of a broad question, which is maybe you could identify one or two pieces of legislation that were either successful or unsuccessful in getting passed during the time you were in the assembly that you think are important to talk about?

BERGESON: I was usually just a part of a conference committee that was important. One of the areas that I was successful in with the Resources, Land Use and [Energy Committee] was getting the Coastal Commission out of the role of affordable housing because they were literally dictating housing policies and I mean it was completely destroying property rights. But it was also putting an unworkable situation on how do you maintain low income housing on property that is, you know, worth a great deal more? Someone might be poor when they moved in but what happens if suddenly they hit the lottery which isn't possible but. Often times young people starting out, you know, the potential is there but when they move into the house they may have a very meager salary. Well, how do

you control that? And then how do you control resale if they You know how do you maintain I mean there were so many things that were totally impractical with affordable housing or low income housing and putting it into an area where you have very high priced land You know who maintains the upkeep? And supposing they can't Because the assessments are high because of the high cost of maintaining services to people who want those services So there were a lot of problems Well we were able through a bill—I think it was a [David A.] Roberti bill that we worked on in a conference committee in eliminating that portion So that I thought was a rather major accomplishment in that regard

YATES You mentioned the index

BERGESON And the indexing of income tax I think probably was the most significant bill I ever But what happened is that when I got it through the legislature they amended it in the final committee I got it through both houses And I remember when I got over to the senate [Kenneth L.] Ken Maddy told me Marian you never want to fall in love with a bill Well I had fallen madly in love with this bill and I was [Laughter] going to see that it got its rightful place So I did I have never worked so hard on a bill in my life and of course you know I was really a novice at it It was I think the first bill I'd introduced

It then became a part of the negotiations but with the Republicans Safe passage of the bill and getting it through certain committees was

difficult But I mean we still had strong resistance because Willie Brown was you know bound and determined he was not going to let this bill get through But it did get through the assembly then the hope was well they'll kill it over in the senate And [Alfred E] Al Alquist didn't like it either and he was the chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the senate And so I went and talked to him He was very nice but I mean he can be very gruff I don't know if you've ever been in a committee when Al doesn't like something

YATES No [Laughter]

BERGESON and you know he didn't want the bill to get out Well I enlisted the help of [William] Bill Campbell Senator Campbell then who was vice chairman and he helped me In fact I remember it was on my birthday that they got it out of Appropriations They called me at the airport and they made an announcement on the airplane I mean it was one of those days I was flying and would never have had to take off in the airplane But then some way or other they got a sunset clause into it for three years where they would analyze it

YATES Oh yeah so this is where I remembered that it was only for specific periods

BERGESON So it was only for those three years Well so then the next year I introduced a bill that would make it permanent It got all the way through the legislature and Governor Jerry Brown vetoed it So then Howard

Jarvis came to me and said "If you'd like to get involved with an initiative I'll be glad to co work it with you" At the time he was having ill health He had to fall out so I carried the initiative But all it did Because I had so many people tell me "The public doesn't understand it You can never sell this initiative it's too complex" I said "All you have to say is that when you get a cost of living increase you get bumped into a higher tax bracket Everybody understands that because we were in a period of very high inflation at that time All it was was to make it permanent"

YATES And what year was this?

BERGESON You know I don't remember exactly It was probably '80 or '81

YATES It wasn't '82 was it?

BERGESON It could have been '82 because it took me a full year to get the permanence¹ See it would have been at the time that it was expiring which would have been probably at the end of the third year Because it never kicked out we always had it in force And I think what they put into it that it would go back to a 3 percent threshold and then it would sink back to 3 percent and we wanted the full impact of it And so the initiative then was the only thing that was left

So I carried the initiative I went to every editorial every newspaper every place I could to try to get the support for it and we got a

1 Proposition 7 (June 8 1982) income tax indexing

lot of support. And Gray Davis, Governor Brown's chief of staff followed me every place I went. I'd be on an editorial board or at a news broadcast, you know, where I'd get, "You know how they used to have these three minutes and they'd allow you a rebuttal?" And I'd always find Gray Davis following me. At least I exhausted him because he worked very hard trying to defeat it. But we were successful. As I said, that's probably the most massive undertaking I've ever done, and I've often told Ken Maddy, "You see, falling in love with a bill is OK." [Laughter]

YATES: Is there anything else? I know we're skipping probably lots of things but I had identified transportation obviously as a big issue, and the environment seemed to, in relating to the Coastal Commission. I saw about Crystal Cove State Park and some issues there with mobile homes also, right?

BERGESON: Yeah. We worked a lot with the county. As I've said, a lot of these were issues that we worked [on through] the Budget Committee. The Crystal Cove Park was a portion of that, and of course, the sale of that was. We actually negotiated a lot of that through my office. And then with the disposition on the Crystal Cove residents, getting the contracts. I mean, these were budget items that we worked closely with the Budget Committee—the sub-committees and then with the full committee.

YATES: OK.

BERGESON: And I guess probably one of the major efforts also was on the dredging

of the Upper Newport Bay because as you know the bay was nothing but a mud flat and that had been a sore spot for a long time. Because the environmentalists were upset because they didn't want dredging because they felt it would disturb somehow what was there and that we would lose access to the environment that existed—the surrounding you know habitat. And I didn't really feel that that contaminated muddy mess back there was doing anything for the habitat. Then on the other hand those that wanted it dredged said, No. This is their problem. The Irvine Company because they're developing they should take on the dredging. There should be no responsibility for the state. So finally we organized got everybody in a room got the city people from Irvine from Newport Beach anyone who had an impact on the Upper Newport Bay. Got them together and said, You know we are losing a very valuable resource. Because by then it was evident that there was no tidal flushing therefore the lower bay was then starting to silt in. We were going to lose the whole harbor if something wasn't done. So we made it pretty clear that you know it had to be a draconian effort and everybody had to be willing to give

So we went up the state and we took some money that former senator Dennis [E] Carpenter had carried for some kind of a vista for the Upper Newport Bay. We took that money put it into dredging and nobody knew we were doing it. The people that were opposing it they

didn't know because it had already happened and we got it through Assemblyman Terry Goggin was then chairman of the committee. My chief of staff we met with him at Frank Fat's the night before. We were able to get an agreement that would get it through. We got it through and that was the beginning because it started kicking in. This was a very very tough time to get money for anything but it kicked money into some dredging operations. Then we sat down and negotiated agreement with the county through the Subcommittee of Resources through Senator Robert [B.] Presley's subcommittee to set up basins. These were desilting basins that would trap the silt coming in from the Santiago Creek which is the large flow that comes through and eventually deposits the silt actually into the bay and we set up these basins to catch the silt. And then setting up on going maintenance money and then we got the dredging operations in place. And I remember George Deukmejian. I mean if I were. This is one of those things you probably wouldn't want to know about but I mean it tells a lot about the legislative process that there was a bill that would have recaptured—this was during the time we were trying to get as much money—some of the retirement money to put it into a trust that would give some equitable balance to the fiscal situation so that you know it would show on the books. It wasn't taking any of the retiree's money but they felt threatened by it. And every retiree wrote a letter opposing my bill. I mean it was just a disaster. So my pay for this

was a million dollars for a clam shelled dredging effort that came in and because of the way they utilize this to take twice as much silt out And it costs a little more but it could do a job Well I mean we walked out there and here was this beautiful bay I mean it was you know the most exciting thing I mean from really being able to see something happen From this mud flat into seeing you know the water thrashing about Of course unfortunately it's an ongoing maintenance problem You know it needs continuing effort But if we hadn't done that we would have lost the bay You know I don't doubt that we probably would have lost a lot of the harbor as well waiting for something to happen that no one was willing to take the responsibility for So I think that was you know really something that I was very proud of—that we had a lot of good support As I say without the help of Bob Presley and with Terry Goggin but that's getting back to You accomplish what you accomplish not because of partisanship [but] because of forming relationships and understanding and working with people And that's where I felt I was able to be successful in many areas You know that was difficult for other people who went in and It was just say no ' to whatever things that government wants to do or say

YATES Well you mentioned George Deukmejian I didn't understand the connection You were talking about the retirees coming out

BERGESON He was then governor

YATES Oh OK

BERGESON This was the time that he was governor

YATES I see so you mean in terms of his

BERGESON And he was trying to balance the budget and I was willing to carry this bill And I mean it was a terrible terrible bill because of the opposition

YATES I see So you mean in terms of him signing it?

BERGESON Yeah yeah though the bill was defeated But you know the governor has ultimate control over the budget and in the budget negotiations to give the additional funds toward the back bay dredging

YATES I see

BERGESON And that was sort of you know kind of Not necessarily quid pro quo but it was showing that he appreciated you know the efforts that I [Inaudible]

YATES OK Well you know I wanted to jump back for a minute to your committees because I also saw that in 1981 you headed up the newly created Select Committee on Education Does that sound like the right title?

BERGESON Was that Let's see

YATES I read that in an article

BERGESON Oh yes

YATES but then when I look at your list [of committees] I'm not sure

BERGESON Well there was one on the [Joint Ad Hoc] Education Sunset Review

[Committee] Is that it?

YATES Maybe that's what they were referring to

BERGESON It could have been. Because there's a review set on how. Well, one of the agreements that we made and the Republicans were successful in obtaining was a sunset on all the categorical programs. That meant bilingual—it meant all these programs that were special purpose. But the revision said that the funds had to go for the purposes intended. Even though the regulations were removed they still had to go to those purposes, which meant, of course, you had to put in some way of showing they were going to those purposes, so you don't really lose a lot of regulation. But they had a review to determine that those goals were being met. That you know, that they were getting adequate review. And yeah, I did serve on that and then on also the Revision of the Penal Code [Committee]—that was one that David Roberti was chairing. You know we provided for review similar to what we did with the education code in eliminating a lot of the obsolete or out of date provisions and just kind of lining it up with the here and now as opposed to things that just get overlooked over the years and you don't get where you need to go with code sections that are consecutive.

YATES OK. Is there anything else—I know we've been jumping around here a little bit—about the committees or legislation in particular before I

BERGESON Well, I went through purgatory in. Is it '80? When Carol Hallett took

over the

YATES Well that leads right into my next question [Laughter]

BERGESON OK well then

YATES Go ahead go ahead

BERGESON Carol Hallet took over the leadership of the assembly I mean as minority leader of the assembly Republicans and I didn't support her. And this I felt you know well She came and asked for a vote and I said No Carol I said I'm committed to Bruce Nestande He helped me I think I'm you know loyal to the people that supported me and got me here And I said You know I'll be happy to support you if you have the votes And I figured you know that it was fine Well of course Bruce required a voice vote in caucus so you knew who the good guys and the bad guys were as far as who was willing to support the new leadership And I didn't realize that puts you forever more in the rump caucus which I then became part of which is the caucus that's out of power And I had been promised a seat on the Ways and Means Committee and then So I went into talk about it and Carol said "No sorry you can't have that and I was very upset because I felt a commitment had been made but you know I was still going to work at it. And then really the crowning decision came along when It was right after the McCarthy Howard Berman battle which was the fight for leadership on the Democrats side and that was brewing for some time

before You know everyday they would get up and they would remove the leader which would go through this effort of futility and vacate the chair or whatever And so finally it was going to be done in an election and they were lining up their candidates Who was a McCarthy and who was a Berman? And it was a real battle you know through the election And as it was Berman was successful

So McCarthy of course was out and I went and talked to Howard Berman being you know pragmatic and I said I should get my order in as far as the committees that I want And so I you know had assurance that I could serve on Ways and Means and a few other committees that I wanted And then the Republicans called and said that they were setting up a joint coalition for Willie Brown and the reason was because Willie Brown was going to help them in reapportionment Or that was the perception I don't think it was ever a commitment Willie's too smart for that Best politician California ever had was Willie Brown I mean not the best in the qualitative but best as far as political skills But he somehow managed to get enough Democrats and enough Republicans together

YATES To support him?

BERGESON to form a coalition to support him Well I said If you are supporting Willie Brown because you think that he's going to help in reapportionment I think you're going after the wrong man I mean first thing he'll do is consolidate his own caucus and make certain his

Democrat votes are all there I mean that's his livelihood Well I didn't support Willie Brown In fact I abstained I didn't support any of the others And of course Willie was elected and then I was really in purgatory because I didn't go along with this

So I was put on the committees of which there's no ability to raise funds PERS [Public Employees' Retirement System] which is all union funds Labor and Employment which is all union funds and of course Education they let me stay on because the Republicans didn't want to be on there anyway And so in a sense

YATES So this is the Labor and Employment Committee? Public Employees and Retirement Committee? OK And you were still on Education?

BERGESON Yeah yeah

YATES OK

BERGESON And so that would be considered purgatory because I wasn't able to

YATES It doesn't wield any power

BERGESON I had no power I was not able to collect funds because I wouldn't be collecting funds from the labor parties as a Republican and so I remember In fact I talked to several of my friends who were Democrats and said You know And it was good advice for me In fact one of them was Richard Robinson who was one of the real deal makers—Democrats—and he said "Marian I've been there enough to He said You have your vote You never forget your vote

That's your weapon. You keep that weapon. You use it judiciously.
 And he said, 'You know, just don't worry about it.' And, of course, I
 just... It was not a particularly pleasant time. I mean, you know,
 you're really, really way out there.

I remember they ran a campaign against... Well, they had another
 Republican here, Nolan Frizzelle, who was a nice guy, but, you know,
 [Laughter] just not a real strong person nor an effective legislator. Well,
 a very effective individual named [David G.] Dave Sills was going to run
 in that seat. He's now a [Fourth] Appellate [District] court judge, but he
 wanted to run in the seat. Gosh, I thought that would be a wonderful
 opportunity to pick up someone who really has the skills, the ability to do
 something.'

Well, the caucus came to me and told me they wanted... Because
 they thought this fellow was obviously a threat and they were protecting
 Nolan. Oftentimes, it's who's supporting the leadership rather than who's
 the best qualified because those are the votes that they need to protect
 their power. And knowing full well that—this was when [Patrick J.] Pat
 Nolan was the minority leader—Nolan Frizzelle was always, you know, a
 pledge vote, whereas Dave was an unknown, probably more independent
 and they didn't know what he'd be doing. So they wanted me to write a
 letter in support of Nolan Frizzelle and send it out in the mail. And I said,
 'No, I won't do it.' So I remember they said, 'well, they were going to

have me expelled from the caucus And I just said Expelled from the caucus? I said I am a member of the caucus not by virtue of you voting for me but for the people who send me up here I'm a bona fide member of the Republican Caucus and you can't expel me ' But I remember that got me into a good deal of difficulty and about that time Assemblyman [Robert W] Bob Naylor was making a pitch I've forgotten how the sequence [went] because it was kind of an off again and on again And of course I was a supporter of Bob Naylor's In fact I was the minority whip when Bob was the minority leader The problem was that in order to be a whip you have to have whipees and [Laughter] I didn't have any whipees

YATES Well now you weren't the only one though who didn't support Willie Brown right?

BERGESON No in fact

YATES You had two female colleagues who did not support him

BERGESON I had Jean Moorhead and I had Marilyn Ryan Also Bill Leonard Jim Ellis there were a few of us As I've said we ended up in the rump caucus

YATES So yeah I was going to say then how did your experience compare to theirs? So you were all sort of in the 'dog house '

BERGESON Well yeah Marilyn was defeated by [Gerald N] Jerry Felando in a vicious campaign where Prop 13 was used against her Terrible

campaign Jean Moorhead changed her party

YATES Right I remember that

BERGESON She became a Democrat Bill Leonard did his thing You know he felt pretty much the same way I did He continued to be He's a very ethical very strong person Bill was always a good member Very very conservative but I mean he was always It was based on good logic and reason His votes were not just you know to be in line with everybody else's He took a leadership role I think Floor debates and that sort of thing

But what saved me really was a seat opening up for the senate I'd been waiting for a seat in the senate hoping that that would be an opportunity There had never been a Republican woman in the senate and certainly no woman had ever served in both houses and I figured this would be a good opportunity And I had a lot of support from my district I always was elected you know 77 76 75 percent so I knew that I always had good support Well they were going through This was when reapportionment was doing some weird and bizarre things to protect legislators

YATES That particular reapportionment was

BERGESON Yeah See this would have been in the '82 elections

YATES Right

BERGESON So it was the first year after the new reapportionment And the senate

Republicans were sort of carving out their districts that they wanted to represent. And there was John Seymour and there was William Campbell and there was [William A.] Bill Craven. Well, they got these nice districts that they all, you know, liked very much. So they left this rather bizarre district which went from the L.A. County line down all of coastal Orange County into northeast San Diego County, southwest Riverside County and all of Imperial County. And that's what was the Bergeson district. Except that the senator who lived in Long Beach was upset because they gerrymandered his district away. He didn't have a district.

YATES: Who was that?

BERGESON: This was Ollie Speraw. He was very, very far right and I mean, he wasn't. See, the senate was not what you'd consider. I mean, Ken Maddy and Bill Campbell were the minority leaders and you know they're anything but what you'd consider to be ultra conservative. They were more moderate. And of course, Ollie was sort of the one way out on the right wing fringes and so you know they just pretty well eliminated his district. So what he decided to do was to set up an office in Newport Beach and move down here and run, thinking that he could force me out, you know, being an assembly person. And I said, No. He didn't represent the district, he didn't live here, didn't know anything about the issues. And of course I had been working strongly down. Trying to get familiar, know the people in Imperial County and had represented some of

San Diego county where I had been working you know Ever since I knew the district was there I decided well I'm going to get in an airplane and I'm going to go around it I'm going to see what it's made up of and then spend my time getting familiar with the issues which I did

[End Tape 3 Side B]

[Begin Tape 4 Side A]

YATES Let me go back for a second You were talking about your district and this would be the Seventieth [Assembly District] I believe that resulted because of reapportionment But let me go back for a minute to the Berman Brown struggle which is You mention why certain members of the Republican Caucus were gravitating towards Willie Brown and tied into the reapportionment issue But why did you think that Berman would be a better speaker?

BERGESON Well I felt that whoever could find support of the Democrat Caucus otherwise you're going to find continuing internal friction going on which affects both houses as it had with McCarthy and Berman You know I said whoever wins I support

YATES I see It's a practical matter

BERGESON Because I think it's a matter of the Democrats controlling and having a unified caucus which makes The house works better that way otherwise everything is done on a split of who's going to benefit from a certain bill And then you also have to worry about your bills you know

whether you link up with one group or another. In other words, there's a lot of friction that goes on with a fractious caucus, either side.

YATES Right

BERGESON And so, I mean, my premise was and it's always been, you know, whatever the Democrats. Who they elect is their business. I don't think that we should mess around, you know, with who should be speaker. But the feeling was—with the Republicans—that we can find someone that we think is more acceptable from a Republican perspective in working with, which is Willie. And, of course, Willie is the consummate all-time, most astute political operator that we've ever had. I mean, he knows where to coalesce. But, I mean, at the same time, you know, he's going to protect his interest with his caucus, and here we have this issue of reapportionment coming up, which is the biggest issue as far as setting direction for the next ten years about who's going to be in control. Because the really partisan issue, the most important one, is who you vote for leadership. And if you have a Republican, that means that you're going to be able to sit on the best committees, you're going to have chairmanships. If it's going to be a Democrat in charge, then, I mean, So these are the things that you. That's why party unity is very important when it comes to numbers because the majority number's going to prevail. After Watergate, we had a Democrat-controlled legislature by two-thirds. I mean, you might as well stay home, you had no role to

perform. They didn't need to bother with you. They could do anything they needed to do to get their legislation because it could be signed by a Democrat governor and they didn't need to worry about it. And so I mean that's where partisanship comes in because there is a philosophy that generally goes with the parties. You get into the extremes and that's where you find the differences within both caucuses.

And that's where I think you know it isn't necessarily that you have to be somebody who is always to the middle because I think you need strong arguments to be able to debate and get people to understand the issues. But you need people that have the intelligence to be able to articulate and to be able to be persuasive but you also need them to represent the district that they were elected in. And that was the argument that I used about Ollie Speraw he had no understanding where[as] we had worked for years on issues that were important to the district that I represented. For someone to come into [Newport] Beach and say well I mean I'm sorry he lost his district but you know you don't move people around just so to protect their interests for a role in the legislature. You elect because you want people that you think are going to do the job or representing your interests. And so we just ignored him and went about doing and finally he dropped out. So I had no opposition when I ran for the senate in the final analysis.

YATES

Well you mentioned the fact that you and a number of others were not

with the rest of the Republican Caucus on this issue and how therefore your committee assignments were constrained or you know you were not on committees that had power but I did see that you were on Ways and Means Is that correct? How did that happen?

BERGESON That I got on later and You know again it was primarily more a role of the Democrats than it was the Republicans

YATES Of getting you on there?

BERGESON And there was a time when Of course when I was with Bob Naylor See when Bob was able to pick up the votes then I was given You know through Bob I was given and I believe that s No wait a minute I think that s when I was given the Ways and Means Committee Because I was also minority whip at that time

YATES OK

BERGESON Sometimes I get focused as far as these years because they kind of blur

YATES No I m sure they blend together

BERGESON Yeah But it was with Bob Naylor and then No that s right because Bob That s it Because when Bob was the leader was when I was running for the senate because while I was running for the senate there was a battle going on in the assembly And Gil Ferguson was running against [Kenneth] Carpenter and it could have been Ron Cordova and I think there was somebody else And I had interviewed all of them and I decided to stay out It was viewed that my endorsement would be very

significant in this race. And I had told each of them that I would not endorse as long as they had no commitment made to leadership. Because Pat Nolan was trying to get the votes to throw Naylor out in order to regain leadership. And frankly I was much more supportive of Bob Naylor's leadership than I was of Pat Nolan's.

YATES: Here's the list of people who were running for that district.

BERGESON: Yeah, see, there were

YATES: Sorry to interrupt you.

BERGESON: There were a number of them.

YATES: Right. This is your old. Since you were running for the senate.

BERGESON: Yeah.

YATES: I'm sorry I interrupted you. So you were saying.

BERGESON: Yeah. The top contenders became Ken Carpenter, Ron Cordova, and Gil Ferguson.

YATES: OK.

BERGESON: Well, Gil had promised me that he had not made a commitment. I introduced him to people that were on Naylor's side, you know? Fine, he had no reason to believe that he would continue supporting the current leadership. Then the next thing I see, all of the Nolan people are walking precincts in the district. And so I confronted him with it and, you know, I mean, definitely they were out there, he had made a commitment. So I came out with a press conference supporting Ken Carpenter the weekend

before And of course it caused bad blood between Ferguson and myself from that point on And primarily because I felt that I had really been lied to as far as his involvement and I felt it just was not the sort of thing that I felt I could keep quiet about So I did I called a press conference and he still won We knew probably it was too late

YATES Gil Ferguson won?

BERGESON Yeah he still won But it was primarily because of the involvement of Pat Nolan and the people here which you know always kind of set me up But I threw out that I think I still have a good relationship with most of these people because I've never tried to be combative I mean they know where I come from and I don't try to minimize the positions that I think that are important

YATES So carry through on I was asking you though about how you got on Ways and Means so

BERGESON So that was Bob Naylor

YATES Bob Naylor OK

BERGESON That was Bob Naylor Because at the time that I was running for the senate I was then with Bob Naylor and he was

YATES I see

BERGESON That's why I put that context in

YATES Right OK So you were actually on Ways and Means but it was not for the whole term or session

BERGESON Yeah No I do remember sitting up there with the thousands of sheets of paper trying to go through The Ways and Means agenda was so But again it was programmed you know? You would get your little sheet these were the Democrat positions and these were the Republican positions You'd just go through You know you were supposed to vote the party line

YATES Let me ask you about the 1982 election and you can correct me or clarify for me because at that point reapportionment had kicked in because you were in a new district But remind me—you may have just discussed this—was there a negative or positive aspect to reapportionment on that particular district?

BERGESON No in fact I got a dream district

YATES OK

BERGESON It was probably a model district Because I no longer had San Diego which had been difficult

YATES Oceanside and that

BERGESON Oceanside And it pulled the district in much more I mean it was a real cohesive district You couldn't have found a better district It was still strongly Republican and very homogeneous so that it was a perfect district for somebody to come into And as I say had I not felt the strong desire to go the senate it would have been great And of course term limits hadn't occurred so I probably would have maintained that

YATES So when did you make the decision to run for the senate?

BERGESON As soon as it opened I had planned on it I hadn't planned on quite as bizarre a district as they ended up with but I still As I said I had a very very strong desire to be in the senate I felt I could be more effective there So as soon as it was open or there was you know I was down there had my organization set up came out with endorsements We had it well prepared

YATES Explain why do you think you could be more effective in the senate?

BERGESON You have more independence and fewer members You don't have to be running for election all the time And even though you're not running for election Because I came from a district that had the funds available I was always expected to be raising money for other candidates But you know I didn't mind raising money because it was not that difficult except I mean it was easier after I got decent committee assignments but I just felt that you had a great deal more individual stature not stature as such [but] individual capability to get things done And it was simply not this strict party rule where you go into a committee and you're fed pretty much the votes that you're supposed to take and you're in difficulty if you don't vote with the party

[End Tape 4 Side A]

[Session 4 June 21 2000]

[Begin Tape 5 Side A]

YATES Before picking up with discussing your campaign for the state senate in 1984 there was one topic I wanted to ask you about I noticed in looking through your clipping files that you loaned me that in December of 1983 the National Forum for Women State Legislators met in Coronado [California] for a couple of days And I noticed this group too was sponsored by the Center for American Women in Politics at [the State University of] Rutgers I was curious to find out what you remember about that particular meeting?

BERGESON Well I remember it was an opportunity to network cross fertilize if you will with women legislators from across the country policy holders and of course there were all types of elected officials appointed officials But it was a rather unique experience because I don't think a forum [like] this had ever been held certainly not in California And as California legislators we hosted at least one of the hospitality programs I remember there was a bit of a fracas over the fact that Philip Morris [U S A] I think was giving some sponsorship and the concerns over tobacco funds going

in So even in that early time

YATES Nineteen eighty three

BERGESON there was some concern about whether or not those funds were those that we should be soliciting But it was generally an opportunity to view some of the issues As Republicans we shied away from some of what we considered to be the more controversial issues and particularly as it got into some of the national elections and national positions and so forth But generally I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to really talk to women from throughout the United States I think it was a very impressive group I think those of us that were in attendance were very very much impressed with the caliber and the talents that were exhibited by the women that were there

YATES When you say controversial issues what do you mean exactly?

BERGESON ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] abortion Those were issues at that time that—of course some of them haven't gone away—tended to polarize in certain areas of When you would have positions that would come before the body as a group in order to adopt policy and it was sort of hands off You don't want to you know? We'll agree on much more if we concentrate on those areas I know I was on one of the panel It had to do with elections I believe campaigns that sort of thing

YATES OK

BERGESON It was more how to get women elected and how do we get them into the

process. I think the overriding theme was let's get good women elected to office.

YATES: So what did you come up with in terms of those particular issues—getting women into office?

BERGESON: Well, I think it was discussion making, primarily. I don't think there was. We didn't come out with any PAC [political action committee] groups or, you know, actual support groups. But I think there was a general acceptance of the fact that women needed to be better recognized for their talents and those elected offices and getting them into the elected offices, as well as seeing that they stayed elected. So I think it was a real pep rally, you know, for women to be much more active in the political process.

YATES: Well, I noticed in the article that one discussion that occurred—and I don't know if it was at the plenary session or later—seemed to revolve around whether women should try to become part of the 'old boys network' or instead set their own rules and standards. Do you remember any of that discussion, in particular?

BERGESON: Obviously, when you get that many women together, you're going to have, you know, many different points of view. But it was that women had a specific and a very profound impact on policy. And it wasn't so much that we wanted to be part of the old boys club, but we wanted to be able to match the efforts that male candidates were getting as far as attention both

in financial contributions as well as grassroots support. And of course in those days women primarily were the ones who anointed the male legislators by offering to do the precinct work and licking envelopes and putting stamps on their mail. And so it was you know I think a general feeling that women had a contribution to make in a very unique manner and we should go forward and provide not only the views but also support for women.

YATES Now you mentioned when I first asked you about this the position of the Republican women or the feeling of maybe not immersing yourself in some of these particularly controversial issues but how else did the dynamics work in terms of Republican versus Democratic affiliated members?

BERGESON Well of course you know the Republicans are going to support Republicans. I mean that's why you have a partisan system. Where there was any visible effort to try to promote one particular candidate then it would be difficult if you were of the opposite party of that candidate simply because you were elected on a partisan base and of course that's you know the numbers of. Well let me put it this way I was of the minority party much of the time that I was in the legislature and you do not have the advantages and opportunities until your party's in charge. The most important vote that anybody ever makes is for the leadership because the leadership determines who's the committee chairman who are

the people that are going to be able to have control or be the policy makers And so it is very much a partisan issue If you're a Republican you want a Republican president you want a Republican governor

YATES So that transcends being

BERGESON That transcends in all areas And as probably we get into more discussion I can say where that You know dealing with some of my experiences in the legislature

YATES OK

BERGESON You go beyond just being a woman You get into the fact that you're part of a very partisan group

YATES What if anything did you take away from that meeting?

BERGESON I think you just got energized I mean it was confidence raising because you see many role models I remember I think it was Martha Layne Collins Senior moment [Laughter]

YATES This is a woman not from California

BERGESON Yeah She was governor And we had We did we had governors and lieutenant governors and attorney generals You know we had women of that caliber and I mean wonderful role models in the sense of showing the tremendous contribution that women can make And this was on a bipartisan group I mean you could see the talents that these women had been able to bring to the office that they represented and I think it was encouraging to all of us and I think it was rather uplifting We all

went away feeling a little better for the role that we have or could play

YATES Right OK Well I just was curious because like I said I saw a couple of articles on it I imagine it was very interesting

BERGESON It was

YATES And I'm sure some of the issues are the same and some have changed but

BERGESON Basically I think things stayed pretty much the same except that there are a lot more women now And that of course is what we've been trying to accomplish

YATES Well let me shift here now and ask you about your first campaign for the senate in 1984 And like I said last time I think we did talk a little bit about what was going on but why don't you go ahead and talk again about why you decided to run for the senate?

BERGESON Well I had been waiting for a seat to open It had been understood that with reapportionment that there would be because of the shift in population in Orange County an additional seat available for an Orange County legislator And I had great aspirations for going to the senate I felt that I would be much more comfortable in the senate than I had been in the assembly And had been working with the leadership in the senate and there had been a good deal of agreement that I would be a good person to occupy any new seat that came along And there were several proposals that came forward This was a reapportionment

year—1984—but there had been several changes made Eighty would have been the year that the changes were proposed 82 there were new districts and 84 there were new districts and that was the

YATES Right that was

BERGESON time when there was some substantial changes made in plans because of the reluctance of the Republicans to be able to go along with the Democrats and vice versa But what happens and this is traditionally the case is that sitting legislators take pretty much what they want in the way of a district And by the time the sitting senators got what they wanted there wasn't much left except this rather bizarre district which went from the L A County line down to the Mexican border and the Colorado River which was the Thirty seventh Senate District It became an object lesson for how bizarre gerrymandering actually had become

They gave me a helicopter ride to make sure that this was something I felt I wanted to do Of course it was exciting I thought ' You are going to see the world literally because we had all of the problems of Imperial County with the border problems that pollution with the New River coming into the Salton Sea We had the issue of agriculture and at that time there was a great deal of involvement with the farm workers a lot of militancy that was going on and causing tremendous problems And that's when the [Imperial] Valley said no way would they ever be represented by a woman because it wasn't considered So I had a challenge in

Imperial County The portion in San Diego County was all new yet to be developed area still somewhat undeveloped It was more of the rural or highly suburbanized part of San Diego And then western Riverside which was primarily new merging development That s the Murieta Rancho California Temecula

YATES Area

BERGESON And then all of the coastal problems of Orange County So it was pretty much

YATES A little bit of everything?

BERGESON The district that was left was just a little bit of everything but most of the problems that many of the incumbent legislators would just as soon get rid of But in that process of reapportionment the district represented by Ollie Speraw who was a sitting senator was collapsed

YATES Right

BERGESON So he decided to move to Newport Beach so he could run here And I had already declared that I was interested and he felt it was rightfully his because he was an incumbent senator Though he hadn t represented the district you know he still felt that because he was an incumbent senator he had

YATES That he had a right to

BERGESON They expected me to back out and of course I said No way you know? This was a district that I felt I wanted to represent and I was

willing to do what I had to do. Eventually he withdrew but it wasn't until we got into a . . . It was a pretty nasty fight for a while. And then when he withdrew the seat was pretty much a given at that point there was no competition to speak of. I think there was a Democrat but because it's so strongly Republican that there would be very little opportunity for a Democrat to win.

YATES: Well, before he withdrew, how did that manifest itself in terms of this struggle for who was going to run for the seat?

BERGESON: Well, he had a mobile van. He set up an office down in Imperial County. And we, you know, just worked hard to try to get the volunteers and the support. And I worked to get the endorsement of practically every elected representative in the county, all five counties, as a matter of fact. And he had very little base. I mean, there was very little support for him here. Not having been here, he joined the Lincoln Club and tried to get a presence among them. He had money to spend. He was considered a wealthy legislator but the support just didn't come. And then he had some personal problems. I think he was going through a divorce at that time.

YATES: Explain the timing of that and how long approximately did that period go on?

BERGESON: It's hard to remember the dates. I'm sure in some of those clippings.

YATES: OK, but you said you declared your candidacy already.

BERGESON: Right. It could have been as early as 1982 that I intended to run for the

seat and I always felt that getting out early was important to declare that you were interested and then build your support from that. And having a base in the assembly gave me a good deal of support to draw from and so that was

YATES Let me ask you one thing and I may have asked you this before but you just said you thought you'd be more comfortable in the senate. Would you elaborate on that?

BERGESON The independence of the senate was attractive. There was more of an opportunity to become more involved in policy; it was not as partisan and I frankly found that I was not able to do much of what I had felt was important to do in the assembly. I very much had an interest in education issues but it was difficult to get involved because education was pretty much determined by who CTA was able to support for those seats.

YATES Right. I remember you talking about that a little bit.

BERGESON And it made it difficult for a Republican—Republicans had very little interest in education in those days primarily because it was more union driven than it was policy driven from the perspective of most of the legislators.

YATES But this is true. You felt [this] in the assembly but not in the senate so much?

BERGESON In the senate there was an opportunity really to be independent in being able to promote legislation. You had a four year period which meant you

didn't have to be raising money all the time for the next attack in two years which gave you a greater feeling of stability Because I was successful in getting some bills to the senate and of course got to know the legislators over there

YATES Right

BERGESON I had real good rapport and I felt that I could from my collegiality really be very successful you know in working with the senators that I knew and that I'd made good friends Rose Ann Vurch was great She was the only female senator then I think Diane Watson was elected

YATES She came in in '78

BERGESON Yeah And see Rose Ann was elected in 1976

YATES Right I believe that's correct

BERGESON and Rose Ann was very independent You would never consider her to be a Democrat or Republican She represented agricultural interests and she was

YATES So even though her party affiliation was Democrat

BERGESON You'd almost consider her to be an Independent from her view of working with legislators because whatever was good for She really represented her district like no one I have ever known since or before But she was very helpful

YATES This is when you decided to run?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES And did you talk to her about it?

BERGESON Oh yeah And she was very encouraging and helped a lot In fact most of the women were very encouraging at that time because there was not a Republican woman in the senate there never had been And then [Rebecca Q] Becky Morgan decided to run and she's from Los Gatos

YATES Right

BERGESON And she was not supported by the old boys I mean they had supported someone else But no matter which house you're in there is a great deal of attention given to a candidate who will vote for leader You still have that with the power group of who's going to support either the current or try to There's always a rump caucus out there trying to overthrow the current leadership You know they tend to select people that they know are going to support the current leadership and they'll get behind them

YATES And Becky Morgan didn't have that Is that what you're saying?

BERGESON No they did not endorse her They endorsed I think it was Mars Garcia or somebody that they felt you know would be more supportive And Becky was kind of an unknown She'd been I think on the board of supervisors but had not really been involved that much in partisan politics

YATES But she hadn't been in the assembly right?

BERGESON No

YATES So this was her first [time] in office?

BERGESON So having worked with them it gave them a little more And of course at that time Bill Campbell and Ken Maddy were in the leadership And I'd worked very closely with them and you know when I had bills over there I always went to them for help In other words they know who you are

YATES Right

BERGESON They get a feel for what your inclination for legislation is

YATES So you're saying you did get support then from the Republican Caucus in the senate?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES OK What form did that take?

BERGESON Of course after Ollie Speraw withdrew there wasn't a great deal of need for funding so I didn't really get a lot of monetary support because it was a Republican district They figured whoever was there was going to win And I never have had a lot of Republican support and money from the state because I never needed it And of course when you come from what is considered a wealthy district you're supposed to be part of the food chain to provide for other legislators and so you're looked upon more as a contributor

YATES OK Funding's more important in a district that's closer

BERGESON Right Marginal districts are where all the concentration is given And so they're not going to spend money on a district that is a safe district you

know at the expense of someone who really needs the money. It's always been the case. This has always been the most Republican district in the state. I think probably in the world for that matter.

YATES: So you're expected to come up with your own.

BERGESON: Yeah, money. And generally you know, I've never had any problem with fund raising. I always had good support and that was never an issue. The question was how much I could raise for other candidates.

YATES: Well, let me come back to the district which you described as representing these different topics, demographics, whatever the appropriate word is. I'm not really being very eloquent about it, but maybe you could go back and elaborate on that. And in particular, one thing is you just said, for example, in Imperial County, they didn't want to have a woman representing them. So maybe you could talk a little bit more about what the district was like and the challenges you faced.

BERGESON: Well, there were a lot of constituencies and so that took a lot more personal care of looking at issues that were pretty much independent of the entire district. And it was like having fifteen districts within a district. And early on I realized that one size wasn't going to fit all, that you had to work independently with the issues. And not to try to get into competitive issues where they were actually competing for the same dollars because that was a no-win. But where you could really focus on issues that were unique to the area, which meant you had to gain the confidence of the

people and work very closely. And so I mean I was always a hands on legislator. I worked very closely with the city [and] county elected officials with various groups. Senior citizen groups because I represented a lot of senior citizens. I had mobile home parks in Oceanside—that was in the assembly but I mean when I was in the senate also. I had all of San Juan Capistrano and then into San Diego. Riverside and two Leisure Worlds I was representing. So I had to work very carefully and very passionately with senior citizen groups who wrote lots of letters and demanded a good deal of attention. I had a wonderful office staff that you know made certain that every letter was returned. We had a response for all the inquiries. Imperial County we had the agricultural interests. We had the white fly which was a terrible plant disease that infested and literally was apt to wipe out all their crops and so we worked on trying to get eradication efforts going there. Pollution of the New River. All of these of course were brought to my attention during the campaign because we spent a lot of time in these areas. And trying to become familiar with what the local problems were and then to deal selectively with those issues rather than broad general issues that probably would even be competing within the district. Coastal issues. You know where you have all the coastal issues. I think the one area that I ran into some problem with was on offshore oil drilling because there were some areas. Of course Imperial County for example felt that we

should be getting everything we could in the way of resources and looked upon it somewhat differently than the coastal area. But we were able to tie that in not only with the environment with the economy because so much of the economy rested on tourism in the coastal areas so we took a very strong stance on coastal protection and opposition to offshore oil drilling. And at that time that would almost be contrary to a lot of the Republican positions because it promoted self sufficiency and at the time we were having the oil embargo and problems you know with the . . . We were going into a lot of alternative energy during the OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] oil crisis. I mean the way really to approach a district like that is to work with them on individual needs.

And I think as with any politician there's suspicions at first. Particularly Leisure World said they'd never have a woman representing them because you had a lot of the old guard there that just felt that women belonged at home. They shouldn't be in politics. And then of course in Imperial County any woman was a complete anathema to what they considered to be you know the hardball politics that you get into particularly in water issues. And that became very combative. And I think that we were able primarily to win them over by enlisting the help of people locally that we could work with them and they had a great deal of trust in those individuals. Like in Imperial County the Imperial Irrigation

District was stronger than the [Imperial County] Board of Supervisors because In fact they didn't even have staff for the Board of Supervisors I mean they had very little authority I probably shouldn't have recorded on that but [Laughter]

YATES Well I don't know that that's a mystery probably

BERGESON Of course this was some time back but the irrigation district really controlled most of the power there because water was you know everything as far as their industry was concerned And the water rights they wanted to maintain And we were going through the battle then of the Colorado River rights They wanted to do some transfers Then you have the pollution impact I mean it was interesting because in order to solve the water problems they were going to line the canals and then divert some of the run off to San Diego which is 90 percent import as far as water And that meant that the Salton Sea would be reduced In other words you would lose water going into the sea which would increase the salinity because of the inflow from Mexico through the New River So then you had a huge environmental problem and I remember we went down one time but they had the Salton group It's kind of a Well they're It's hard to say what They're some people that have retired and they've moved there and they put their little motor homes and little tackle shops right on what they consider to be the banks of the sea and of course the sea then receded and became considerably far off from their

tackle shops and they were very upset about it and we had some pretty raucous meetings where they invited me down. In fact there was one article. Well they called me that damnable senator from a foreign seaport or something you know being from Newport Beach.

YATES Now this was after you were elected or it was during

BERGESON This was after I was elected while we were trying to solve some of their problems. And we went down and sat through several hours of harangues and when I walked in and tried to shake hands they had their arms crossed and they weren't going to shake hands with that woman. And by the time we finished you know they all came up and shook hands. So we were able I think to give them some assurance. I'm not certain we ever completely solved their problems because as I indicated these problems are almost unsolvable. If you solve someone's problem you're going to make it a problem for somebody else and that eventually is the case when you deal with these issues [otherwise] they would have been solved a long time ago. But in fact I am amused because every time I pick up the paper there's another effort being put forward you know either to clean up the New River. I can't tell how much you know grief we expended in trying to work with the federal government the International Boundary [and Water] Commission and everyone down there to do something to try to clean up the problem of having the Mexican government at that time somewhat resistant to trying to block

the sewage that was flowing back into the United States

YATES Sounds like an overwhelming project

BERGESON And I remember we were on 60 Minutes Yeah even then

YATES Oh really?

BERGESON Oh yeah it's the dirtiest river in the world they claim even worse than those in India because of the direct Well we went down and actually visited we took a member of the governor's staff In fact we almost lost our life in the airplane We got caught in an awful storm going back it was frightening We met with the Mexican government and toured some of the plants Of course some of them were U S plants that had gone there

YATES And they were part of the problem?

BERGESON to avoid the environmental protections that they have to provide in the United States and so they were actually part of the pollution problem that was flowing back into the United States But I mean you'd see carcasses Just you know the worst kind of pollution you could imagine

YATES Well let me Sorry to kind of go away from there for a second but back to the election itself Now once Ollie Speraw removed himself from the campaign what other Republicans were vying to run for the seat if there were any

BERGESON No

YATES Because you were unopposed

BERGESON There was no other The whole effort was to get in early and to seal up all the endorsements and campaign contributions And we effectively accomplished that

YATES Because really it was just between you and the Democratic There were just two of you running which is unusual isn't it to only have two people?

BERGESON Well I think we did a pretty good job of heading off any opposition just by the strength that we were able to come out with initially

YATES It just seems that frequently when a seat opens up obviously that's the time that people try to run

BERGESON You know when you've been in the assembly it does [Inaudible] you know? And I think I did a good job I established myself with most of the constituency groups and we had very strong support from all of the interest groups senior citizen education groups the Lincoln Club the power structure of the Republican party as well And I think I had an endorsement from almost every city council member every member of the board of supervisors within each of the counties So you know it pretty much took away any effort And it would be so expensive for somebody to come in and have to establish themselves unless they had the kind of name identification I think our concern was that you know some famous athlete or something like that could come in but there was never any indication of any interest So we pretty much sailed through after

Ollie withdrew

YATES OK And your opponent was Alice Keyser?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Who was a Democrat And how much of a challenge was that in terms of the campaign?

BERGESON I frankly attended all the forums I felt that you know it wasn't really much of an obstacle to overcome simply because of the voter registration We had our forums and I imagine she got 25 percent of the vote or something the usual hard core Democrat vote In fact it's hard for me to remember who my challengers were because they never had the ability to really generate the interest or the money

YATES Well you go through a number of elections so I'm sure it's hard to remember

BERGESON Yeah

YATES the specifics of each one Well as you mentioned you and Becky Morgan did win elections so the two of you became the first female Republican senators At least early on or maybe it's better to talk about later what was that like in terms of going to the senate and there are now four women altogether

BERGESON Well I think they were probably more concerned than we were because I don't think they quite knew how to handle women in the caucus In fact when anyone would swear or use you know some language that might be

colorful they would apologize. Of course I had been in the assembly [Laughter] and it was such a clean up. I couldn't believe you know the difference in the caucus the operations in the caucus. It was pretty amazing. But I think they were very conscious of the fact that they now had women because in fact some of the senators continued to get up when we would walk in—I mean would actually rise. And I remember Senator Bill Craven who was I mean an incredibly. His mannerisms. He was just impeccable in the way he treated women. I mean it was just really his style. I don't think he would ever change. He's passed away since. But as soon as we'd walk in he'd get up and never. You know if I'd go back and talk to him at his desk—he was behind me—he would never sit down while I was standing. It was nice but there was just a different feeling. I mean they were very conscious of the fact that women were around and were very courteous and they were always gentlemen. One of the senators did mention to me—because Becky tended to be a bit more strident than I was—'You should do something to let Becky know we're not all women haters here. [Laughter]

YATES Well I imagine when you were in the minority it would be a bit of a difficult thing to go into the group and especially since that was her first time in state office. Well what was your experience? Or how did your experience compare with being in the assembly now that you were in the senate?

BERGESON It was night and day It was almost the opposite in the way of the ability to get the committees you wanted You know I sat down with both my leadership and met with David Roberti who had just taken over as president of the senate and you know indicated my interests and they were pretty well filled I got the committees that I requested And of course I was always in purgatory [Laughter] in the assembly and so I usually got the committees I didn't want which was kind of you know the punishment that you were given But no I found that the requests that I made were all granted and you were given every opportunity to have the kind of staff that you felt I mean we could select our own staff and oftentimes in the assembly the staff was almost handpicked for you

YATES Oh really?

BERGESON You know if you were vice chair you'd never be a committee chair in those days in the assembly But it was an opportunity for you to really have a meaningful role You could really advance policy You still had partisan obstacles obviously and there was party discipline and you know certain rules that you couldn't violate if you wanted to take on a leadership role But I was elected the minority whip of both houses It was [Laughter] a lot different [because] nobody paid attention to me in the assembly As I say in order to be a whip you've got to have whippees [Laughter] and I never had any whippees in the assembly But in the senate it wasn't so much trying to develop caucus positions but it was

trying to get backup material or whatever would help you know? And then we'd try to get the analysis in such a way that would reflect Now in those days of course [H L] Bill Richardson was in the senate and Bill was very partisan and continued during the time he was there to exercise a good deal of partisanship and he continually sniped at the leadership And then of course when they had the numbers then the leadership was changed The leadership generally had a lot to do with how many Republicans I guess the Democrats would operate I've never sat in a Democrat caucus so I don't know But for the Republicans the leadership would generally evolve around elections and how many won how many lost and if there were losses you could pretty well guarantee that there would be a change in leadership It's like a business a profit margin you know and your ability to lead That continued through the course throughout the time that I served in the senate

YATES Now when you came in who was the minority leader?

BERGESON It was Bill Campbell

YATES OK But then [James W] Jim Nielsen became minority leader is that correct?

BERGESON Then Jim Nielsen became Jim Nielsen was part of the Bill Richardson group

YATES I was going to say because he was different from the Ken Maddy

BERGESON Right The Maddy Campbell [group] were probably viewed [as] more

moderate more negotiating

YATES So it shifted from moderate to more conservative then?

BERGESON Yeah however Jim Nielsen himself was not really what you would consider to be really right wing I don't know how to describe these titles But I mean he was not viewed to be the most conservative member I think Of course by and large Bill Richardson was always considered to be the most extreme

YATES Right the most extreme in that

BERGESON Yeah

YATES OK Well you mentioned coming in and being able to get your committees or assignments that you were interested in Maybe you could talk a little bit about what your goals were and what committees you wanted

BERGESON Well I looked at the district You know what were the needs of the district? Transportation was a heavy issue and so I asked for the Transportation [Committee] Water because I represented the Imperial County So I asked for Ag[riculture] and Water [Resources Committee] At that time it was one committee I think they have now separated both committees Then Let's see

YATES We're looking at a list here I wrote up of your assignments Education [Committee]

BERGESON And Education because of my interest there And of course again I was

vice chair. At that time Gary Hart was chair of the committee and I was vice chair. And I had a lot of interest, of course, and education had been there for some time. I was on Rev[enue] and Tax[ation Committee] and that was a very important committee for me as well because they were looking at tax issues and I had a lot of business interests and concerns on what was happening with the corporate tax structure and so forth. And when I was in the assembly I had worked with Bill Lockyer and I had been part of the conference committee that worked on the inventory tax. So I had an interest in tax and also had a lot of relationships with education funding which related again to tax mechanisms and how you're going to be able to provide funds for certain programs.

YATES And then you ended up being chair of the Local Government [Committee]

BERGESON Well, what happened actually is Milton Marks had been the chair of senate Local Government and they allowed for one Republican to have a chairmanship. Well, Milton Marks changed his party to become a member. Milton had been representing San Francisco which I think was like an 18 percent Republican district and he was a Republican. And I used to be kind of amused when they talked about his liberal voting record because who was going to be elected in San Francisco that didn't have a liberal voting record? And of course just to have a Republican there was pretty unusual because the Republicans always voted at least for

the minority leader. Anyway, he decided to change his party, so with that it opened up the seat on the Local Government Committee. And I had at that time always felt somewhat frustrated because I was always vice chair of Education. I was in the assembly under Leroy Greene and then under Teresa Hughes. And I felt like, you know, it would be great to have a chairmanship of a committee and really have a major role in policy development and Local Government being akin to what I consider to be the policy of education. And so I was asked if I would be interested in the job, and so I thought about it and felt, "Yeah, I would really like to change some of my areas of interest. I had felt like I had somewhat been pigeonholed in education issues and felt I could actually do more with local government, so then I accepted the chairmanship of Local Government. And at that time it was interesting because I think every woman in the senate had a committee chairmanship. Rose Ann Vuich was chair of senate Banking. Diane Watson was chair of Health [and Human Services] Committee. Who else did we have?"

YATES: Well, since then there's been Lucy Killea. She

BERGESON: Lucy came in a little later but, yeah, she had a chairmanship of Bonded Indebtedness [and Methods of Financing Sub]committee, and

YATES: Right. Well, Becky Morgan.

BERGESON: And Becky wanted to be vice chair of Education and I thought, well, in fact, I made the agreement with David Roberti. I said, "I'll do it under

one condition that Becky be vice chair of Education ' because I knew she wanted it and she was good on education policy and I felt you know it would be a good place for her as well and she was interested so

YATES But you became vice chair of Education

BERGESON No I became When I took over the Local Government

YATES Oh I see That was part of the deal?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Well before you continue with Local Government explain to me about You just said that one chair went to a Republican Where did that come from or how did that happen?

BERGESON I think it was just past practices I don't know It was there when I got there Bill Campbell preceded Milton Marks on Local Government

YATES So it tended to be Local Government for a while?

BERGESON Generally because it's not considered a real juice committee Republicans would never be given what we call a juice committee because that enables fund raising However I found that it was very intricate It was a committee that never had a good deal of attendance in the meetings because it's boring I mean people have to listen to the intricacies of how you fashion annexation incorporation I mean all these things of which eyes glaze over when you get into the intricacies of it But it deals with where things are placed and when you get to the impact I remember we had one of the issues that drew a great deal of interest in fact even

California State Archives
State Government Oral History Program

Oral History Interview

with

MARIAN BERGESON

California State Assemblywoman 1978 1984
California State Senator 1985 1994

March 31 April 24 May 23 June 21 July 5 August 9 2000
Newport Beach California

By Susan Douglass Yates
Oral History Program
University of California Los Angeles

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from the speaker of the assembly was where you cite waste facilities because then you get into the whole issue of trash business We used to have the meetings filled with a lot of the trash attorneys as well as the lobbyists and the folks that had a very dramatic impact on what happened with You know those were definitely juice areas

[End Tape 5 Side A]

[Begin Tape 5 Side B]

YATES OK you were talking about how exciting Local Government is

[Laughter]

BERGESON Yeah well it was hard to even get the press to even cover some of those meetings unless there was you know some heavy hot issue that affected one particular community But we also had local government which also included housing and redevelopment issues and there were some pretty volatile issues there because it was built around low income housing redevelopment money the [Inaudible] money what happens and you know So you got into a lot of the issues that districts were using redevelopment money for areas frankly that couldn't be considered blight Blighted areas are those of course that you're using redevelopment to refurbish a lot of the urban areas But the private sector was taking advantage of building in redevelopment projects of which that money then siphoned off service dollars that would be going to the city And I remember the redevelopment fund in Los Angeles had a huge

surplus And I recall one time David Roberti coming before the committee with a bill asking to use some of the redevelopment surplus dollars for police protection And I thought and made the comment This is a bit of a convoluted way to get to those revenues that should have gone to police protection in the first place But that s what was happening A lot of the service dollars were being siphoned off for projects that were benefiting certain private entrepreneurs at the expense of providing needed services for communities that simply were denied those revenues by virtue of you know the redevelopment revenue What you do you cap the future revenues and that goes to pay off the debt as opposed to going into general fund for services

YATES So what were some of the solutions to those particular problems? I mean you mentioned the Roberti bill but in terms of the Local Government Committee

BERGESON I didn t sponsor a lot of the legislation but what I did was shape it by the work that we did with the committee bills Because we would take legislation that would For example defining blight tightening up on the definition so that it really had to be a community that was blighted in order to utilize redevelopment And of course you know every now and then you get a bill that knocks that out But I mean the same thing with low income housing The benefit assessment districts And I remember we got into a big battle over a lighting and landscaping act

which was being used then to build all sorts of capital facilities. Because of Prop. 13 there was no money locally available and so they were using a lot of these that didn't have to go to the public for a vote. Well, of course eventually some taxpayer group would get ahold of that and they'd either go for an initiative which, as you know, we've had several of those that would prevent local governments from utilizing that source of funds without a vote of the people. And then, of course, the challenge on two thirds versus majority vote continues for capital facilities and so forth. But these were issues that we dealt with that I think were pretty critical to the issue of land use/development. We also worked with the Wilson administration when I was chair of Local Government on growth management policies. And I carried several bills trying to set up regional planning opportunities, not regional government. We tried to shy away from any form of government but tried to foster regional planning that would lead to good land use policies. Those attempts all fell apart. In fact, Senator Robert Presley and I both carried measures that we eventually wanted to converge at a conference committee but they became so embedded in local controversy that we were never successful. Any local government entity does not want to lose any authority but our concern at that time was the balkanization of planning because you could have a freeway that would narrow down to two lanes when it goes through a certain city where it would branch out to six lanes in the next. I mean, it

just wasn't making any sense and so out of that came SCAG. San Diego had already organized their SANDAG [San Diego Association of Governments] which was their regional council of governments. But some areas including Orange County were very reticent to be part of any kind of a regional planning authority. They want to maintain not lose control of internal planning. But I think you know those continued to be issues and I think will be. I recently served on the Local Governance Commission [for the 21st Century] which again was looking at the very same issues: annexation, incorporation, and what assurance do you have that new communities are going to be able to support needed services? As Dan Walters constantly editorialized, you know these are just stabbing at the problems. But I mean just to stab at the problem is unworkable because you can't get the support you need.

YATES Well, you mentioned the idea of creating a regional planning effort, and what were you envisioning that would be?

BERGESON Well, we had hoped that maybe through SCAG, which is the Southern California Association of Regional Government[s], that something like that could happen, but then there was so much concern that Orange County, for example—and of course I had to represent Orange County's interests—was coming out on the short end because they were putting far more money into it and getting very little because it was all going to Los Angeles. And there's always been this competition between now Los

Angeles which seems to be the big monster of swallowing up any revenues that And so I think we tried to work again with Orange County in ways that we could structure either a congress of governance a local congress of governance but the county repeatedly resisted that I worked with the county in setting up the Orange County Transportation Authority I carried the bill for that primarily to get a majority vote for transportation needs because the two thirds majority would have been impossible and if the board had kept the control of that then they would have had to go for two thirds The separate joint powers authority agency deals with Orange County transportation But I mean they were able to get Measure M¹ which was a half cent sales tax which has funded most of the major transportation facility improvement in the county They became a self help And because they're a self help county which means they pass their own method of financing they leverage a lot of the state money So Orange County has done a good job in attracting state dollars for transportation needs

YATES Well what other issues dominated Local Government? You mentioned regional planning and this issue of redevelopment money that went to redevelopment

BERGESON Water issues because of the water district's authority For example we

1 Measure M (November 1990) Orange County Traffic Improvement and Growth Measurement Plan

were heavily involved with the Malibu [Canyon] Homeowners Association that wanted to go for special assessment for water development because they didn't want to build sewers because if they knew that they had sewers then they'd build and that would be a growth inducing opportunity for the developers to come in. In fact, the one thing I found is that if you want to control a city's capacity, you get ahold of the sewers because there's a definite limitation of what of you can build when you have limited sewer. But they did not have a sewer system and there were problems with polluting the water. For an environmental group, I mean, it was kind of a paradox in a sense. But the issues of incorporation became very heavy during the period of high growth, and of course, you had the constant battle between the county and the cities about revenue sources and who got one portion and who got. You know, trying to keep the playing field level so county services could be provided at the same time cities, when incorporated, could have adequate service levels provided.

YATES: Well, maybe you could talk a little bit too about. I'm trying to think how to word this. My focus here is Prop. 13. You came in the year Prop. 13 passed, and I think you mentioned the legislation that went through to try to deal, at least immediately, with

BERGESON: The bailout was S.B. 154.¹

1 S.B. 154 1977-1978 Reg. Sess. Cal. Stat. ch. 292 (1978)

YATES And so obviously I assume Prop 13 weaves itself in and out of issues that come up. But what did you see happening in terms of what was going on at the local level and the state level in terms of your committee itself?

BERGESON Well, I don't think there's any question that Prop 13 brought on a far greater degree of control from the state. Because the revenues were emanating from the state and then determinations were made either on priority or political decisions as to how those revenues would be doled out. When the property tax transfer, which was to address the critical issues of the 1992—'Ninety one '92, I believe, when we had a \$15 billion dollar deficit. And so the reversal of the property tax was thought to be a solution because considering that during the Prop 13 deliberations where the state bailed local government out because they had a huge surplus at that time—that's when they started income tax withholding and there was a huge surplus buildup at the state level. So that's what [S B] 154. It gave money back to the districts. So the idea that was used in '90-'91 to deal with the fiscal crisis at the state level was to reverse that.

YATES One fifty four was that a proposition? Is that what you're saying?

BERGESON No, this was simply by budget action.

YATES Oh, OK.

BERGESON Because what they had been doing, they had been allocating a certain amount to the counties and so by withdrawing that they didn't actually take any locally oriented revenue sources and that's why the counties and

special districts were the ones that were hurt with that. The cities to some extent, but they didn't depend that much on property tax. I mean, they had their other transit occupancy taxes and sales taxes and that sort of thing. But what it did do was it changed the whole planning for land use in that cities were looking more at revenue producing, which would have been your K Mart and you know, your large box retailers and car malls, automobile malls, that sort of thing. And so that was in a sense a response to the whole cycle of Prop. 13, and then the state making the decision as to where property tax dollars then would be reallocated. And of course during that time when they were looking at that legislation, we were looking at that from a local government [perspective], it was very much a part of our determination on policy. What happens to special districts? And there were a number of exemptions. Fire districts which were allowed to maintain, and I think in some cases where they affected health and safety. And the counties were sort of given the money which were considered augmentation funds to dole them out to special districts. And so the county became an agent of the state in making that determination, but your library districts were literally eliminated. And some of these that we're seeing the result now, you know, where virtually those services have become nonexistent.

YATES: Well, I was going to say it seems to me I've seen things in the paper lately talking about how people now supposedly at the state level are taking

more seriously people saying we can't fund libraries or I mean it sort of seems ironic after that many years but

BERGESON Where you have the problem And this is where frankly it helps to have an understanding what goes on in education because the 800 pound gorilla is education and the state has to guarantee that revenue sources go—I mean it guarantees it in Prop 98¹—to education Besides the interest now they're actually exceeding the minimum guarantee But what happens in that process then is if there is more property tax money given to local entities then that comes out of the education source of funding which means the state has to backfill And so where the counties are saying 'give us back our money' in the meantime the state has given [Prop] 172 funds which is the money that's allocated It's a half cent sales tax that goes to counties and cities for public safety So that is an exchange In some counties they fared better with that and other counties didn't L A took a loss because they had far more property tax because they were assessing at a higher level Orange County had a low level they get back more in Proposition 172 funds than what they lost in property tax And you have these inequities and so the state has been subvening down according to the priorities because 172 [funds] are used specifically for public safety The realignment funds which are for health mental health came through the counties These also are sent by

1 Proposition 98 (November 1988) school funding

virtue of certain purposes that they can be expended only as provided by the state

YATES I see So when I out of ignorance said what s 154

BERGESON S B 154 is the bill

YATES Oh I see OK Sorry

BERGESON That was the bill that allowed for state revenues to backfill the loss of the property tax And that

YATES It certainly is complicated

BERGESON set up the whole system of education that changed from education being on the local property tax then which Serrano and Prop 13 literally eliminated any local control of education Because it all became a state function with a revenue limit established for each child throughout the state

YATES I see So 154 allowed money to be taken

BERGESON It allowed for the exchange of this to occur

YATES OK OK

BERGESON You know it was literally a bailout And along with that was A B 8 which set up the funding and that was the Leroy Greene bill and that was in 1980

YATES Right you worked on that

BERGESON I was on the conference committee on that S B 154 actually occurred before I was elected I think there was a Campbell bill that provided for

the distribution then of the

YATES So this is during the early 80 s you re talking about? Before you went to the senate?

BERGESON It was before I was in the assembly It was before I was elected It was right at the end of 1978 It was kind of an emergency bill that they passed in response to Proposition 13

YATES I see I see

BERGESON Right after the pack

YATES So this all ties into when Prop 13 passed?

BERGESON Right

YATES This was part of the legislature s belated response to what was going on with the initiative process

BERGESON Right

YATES OK Sorry I didn t understand that

BERGESON Yeah it really kind of re framed the whole issue of a distribution of funding but it gave more and more control to the state as far as making determinations on where funds would go and out of what revenue sources

YATES But then you were talking about later 91 92 right?

BERGESON That was when the state was in fiscal disaster We had I think it was close to a \$15 billion dollar deficit And this was when all the defense industry contracts were withdrawn

YATES Downsizing

BERGESON a lot of the subcontractors that were in southern California And so we suffered I mean it was as bad the Great Depression for the economy in southern California

YATES So that money was not coming in?

BERGESON Right We have a constitutional requirement that the state budget has to be balanced and so at that time the idea was to take the money from local property tax put it back in to backfill in order to keep education whole and to pay for the necessary The courts the things that had mandated costs And it all went into mandated cost But I mean all the discretionary money was withdrawn from the locals And in exchange for that there was a great deal of authority given for raising fees so that the counties could raise their fees for all their services so that they could collect locally without having to go to the vote of the public because it was viewed that it was virtually impossible to pass

YATES But that was for the counties right?

BERGESON Yeah counties Well and cities and services For example for court costs they allowed them to charge for all their duplication and you know fair market value whatever it would cost And so that's when everybody was paying higher fees for everything A lot of complaints coming there So that you know established a real rancorous relationship with the legislature and local government because it took away their money And of course at that time the argument was that we had to balance the budget

and there were necessary services that had to be provided by the state level. And we took a great deal of criticism for raising taxes too because I think there was a \$3 billion tax increase of which Governor Wilson took a lot of heat. Besides that we had not only economic disasters we had every man made disaster. I mean not man made what am I saying?

YATES Natural? [Laughter]

BERGESON Act of nature yeah. We had earthquakes we had fires we had pestilence. I mean it was an incredible time.

YATES Well what did you think of that solution? I realize that's sort of a simplified way of putting it but being somebody who had worked at the local level in education.

BERGESON Well you know all those decisions you had to hold your nose. I mean you know you try to build up a system of credibility and when you come to I mean you have to throw out everything that you've ever developed. A lot of your programs that you worked hard to really develop the seed of fruition and were successful and suddenly you know it was gone. When you have to make those kinds of decisions and vote for things that are You know if you suddenly lose your job and you have to change your whole way of living and you have to tell your kids that they may not have enough money to go to college now or they have to give up their car their decisions are going to hurt people particularly your kids. But they hurt you in having to make decisions that you know are

going to be very painful. And I think that throughout that period of time it was a tough time to be in the legislature. Everybody had their idea on what they could cut and we presented all these options and I remember we went through the painful process of mandates. They said take away the mandates and by the time they got through the legislature everybody put them back in because they found out that they were things that they needed. The only one that was actually eliminated was the mandate for the reports for county treasurers. And of course when the Orange County bankruptcy came about the first thing that [Laughter] went back in was the report for county treasurer.

YATES Yes

BERGESON So everybody has their [idea of] what you think you can eliminate. And well the idea was maybe we can turn the lights out in the capitol after a certain time. You got what fifty dollars or something you're going to save? You're looking at billions. It's not really going to add up. So no it was a very painful time to be in government because nobody was very popular and yet you were probably working harder than anyone you know to try to find some sensible solutions. And it's interesting because the paradox is that when you have an economy that's rolling along and everybody can take credit which you don't deserve because people are out there making a profit on their businesses. And people will get re-elected on the basis that things are going well. But the toughest time to be

in office and when it really can determine the talents and the ability of people to deal with issues is when you're in a crisis and you've got to make your ends meet

YATES I know we started talking about the Local Government Committee itself and I think it evolved into more of a general discussion of what was going on but I was just wondering from another standpoint about your experience chairing a committee and what that was like for you or what were the challenges or difficulties of being chair?

BERGESON None really You know I chaired the committee for over ten years and I enjoyed chairing it I mean it was exciting A lot of work You had to do an awful lot of backup work in reading the material and being I always have prided myself in doing my homework because I would never want to go to a committee that I had not you know thoroughly researched and understood what we wanted to do with the bill Also to make certain that no legislation got out of the committee that was inconsistent with the policies that the committee would adopt And I had a committee of people that had a lot different ideas and they all liked to talk but you know And I believe that everybody should have an opportunity in treating people with respect that come before the committee One of the things that I found very offensive was the way many people were treated that would come long distances by some chairman

YATES Really?

BERGESON Particularly in the assembly You find very few of the committee members would be present They'd have maybe the chair and would act very You know and particularly with bureaucrats I mean treating people I thought with a great deal of disrespect Well we gave everyone an opportunity to speak as long as the time would allow I mean you give them a certain time to speak and you have to be precise on time but we always had a full committee I don't think anyone would serve on Local Government that wasn't interested in the minutia and the detail which I had to go through because it was

YATES It was tough

BERGESON They are tough issues And most of them were former Local Government officials and I think they respected the views that were brought before them and I would say it's without question the most technical committee that they have in the legislature

YATES Really?

BERGESON Education would be to some extent but I mean you have a very large committee I think we had nine and then we expanded it to eleven

YATES In the Local Government Committee?

BERGESON In the Local Government Committee And so we made certain that you know we had active And I did have a good deal of control over who the members were going to be so they were invited to be on You know if they requested that was always a good indication that they

YATES Had an interest in the subject

BERGESON Yeah yeah

YATES Well then you were also on the Education Committee for a couple of years when you first were elected to the senate And maybe you could spend a little bit of time talking about what the committee was primarily focusing on when you were there?

BERGESON Well you know it's hard because in education they're focusing on the same issues every year

YATES OK so

BERGESON It seems like it You get the feeling almost every year I've been there and done that you know? It just seems like the issues were pretty consistently the same A lot of issues dealing with local districts You get a lot of the special kinds of programs that they want to set up or model programs or you know pilot programs we would call them

YATES Now you were only on the committee for two years

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Is that correct? And why did you leave that committee?

BERGESON Well because I wanted to take the job of committee chair

YATES OK

BERGESON And I felt that I had been on Education I frankly was starting to

YATES Have enough?

BERGESON Yeah I felt like I had And I was on the State Allocation Board and was

working on a number of other subcommittees I had been on the Education Subcommittee [of the Budget and Fiscal Review Committee] and the budget conference committee the Appropriations Committee and so you know I really felt I needed to change and could link local government to Education should be local as well

YATES Well then I saw it looks like in 87 88 according to the Senate Final History you were vice chair of the Budget and Fiscal Review [Committee]? And now what did that committee focus on?

BERGESON These were all of the budget issues that would come before the legislature I mean everything eventually came to that committee that had any money involved and so any policy issues had to go through that committee

YATES But how does that connect with Appropriations Committee? What's the

BERGESON They divided Appropriations was the I served on Now wait a minute

YATES I have you were on Appropriations 89 to 90 and Budget and Fiscal Review [in] 87 and 88

BERGESON That's right

YATES So obviously Appropriations actually looks at doling out the money

BERGESON Yeah I had forgotten that I had served on that Yeah the Appropriations Committee heard all of the bills The Budget

YATES And Fiscal

BERGESON The Appropriations Committee heard the subcommittee reports and those

dealt with the budget issues And that's when I was on the Education Budget Subcommittee

YATES OK

BERGESON But Appropriations deals with all of the legislation that has a fiscal impact And the other budget issues

YATES And then you mentioned to me that one of the things that I had missing on here this list was the budget conference committee

BERGESON Right

YATES which would have been the same year So maybe you could talk a little bit about that? I know it's very complicated but

BERGESON Well that is where all of the budget issues which generally fund much of the legislation come together Before the budget has been adopted you have the governor's budget that goes through the subcommittees then they adopt the reports from the subcommittees and then that goes to a conference committee made up of both houses

YATES OK

BERGESON And that's what they're doing right now The budgets of the conference committee is Well no The budget conference committee then votes the budget out which goes to either house to concur

YATES And is that the final step before

BERGESON Right right

YATES OK And that's when they're supposed to have it done by June 30

BERGESON Then the budget is to be adopted by the governor And then of course the governor works it over But the last few years what has happened is that the budget conference committee has not been able to resolve many of the issues and then the 'big five'—they call it big five which is the governor and the leaders of both houses—meet and hammer it out and then it goes for a vote of both houses And presumably because everybody has come together on it then it's OK But on the budget subcommittee which at that time when I I mean when I served on the conference committee the 'big five' had much less to do with it because we each worked with our particular party with the governor during that period of time so that there was a clear message of what was acceptable and you know what wasn't And those could be thrashed out and hammered out during the time that the conference committee was convening

YATES So you're saying now that it's become more convoluted?

BERGESON It has because for one thing—this is my opinion—but I think with term limits the budget subcommittees have lacked the sophistication of understanding how you really develop a budget I mean you can't knock out all the governor's programs and think that you're going to get a budget to the governor that he's going to support But in effect that's what some of the budget subcommittees did particularly with the Wilson administration Because then you had the majority members being of a

different party than the governor and so that's when the real hardball negotiating went on. Because of the fact that there really wasn't the understanding that you know it's a process that you have to respect during the subcommittee process. If you just put in all your own private projects and bring in things that were not in the original budget there's no way that the governor's going to give the approval and be willing to sign a budget of that type. So that's why there was much more involvement with the 'big five' during that period of time.

YATES: OK. Well, again, back to the years you were on the budget conference committee, what were the main—if you can identify them—issues that were going on at that point? Or difficulties?

BERGESON: Well, this was just preceding. We were looking at a lot of growth issues during that period of time. It was just before the time when

YATES: The deficit?

BERGESON: We had the huge deficit. The deficit occurred, in fact, right after Pete Wilson was elected and that was in 1990. And so prior to that time the budgets were not all that controversial. It was, you know, what goes to the university system and what goes to the. You know, you're trying to deal out the apportionments in a way that they feel that you have an equitable solution to a lot of the problems. Transportation was a big issue. Always part of this process is the pork—that members come before the budget conference committee and want to have their particular areas of

interest addressed and they You know that is a traditional rite that we go through And then oftentimes it depends on who's going to vote for the budget as far as who gets their particular projects included ultimately in the budget But it was not as controversial certainly as the budgets now where you have a huge surplus nor the budgets where you have a huge deficit

YATES So when do you think you saw the shift of the members of the budget conference committee not it sounds like having as much knowledge base or control

BERGESON It isn't so much the budget conference committee as it is the budget subcommittees

YATES Got you OK

BERGESON See the budget subcommittees have an ongoing process where they deal on the line item issue

YATES OK so it's before it even gets to the conference committee

BERGESON The budget subcommittees have before them the budget as the governor has proposed it they have the legislative analysts who provides the input and you have the Department of Finance

YATES Right

BERGESON And you hear each one of these items and then the budget is developed with that in mind And see then you also have members who come before the subcommittees that ask for special projects to be put in Now if they

have a project in the assembly subcommittee that is identical to the one in the senate subcommittee then it's not a matter of conference. The only matters of conference are those where there's a disagreement between the budget and the subcommittee and the senate and the one in the assembly. And so those are the items that are left for discussion by the conference committee.

YATES I see

BERGESON And so the conference committee [members] are generally pretty knowledgeable people

YATES OK. So it's that period or process before that

BERGESON Yeah. It's just something that is

YATES So when did you think you started seeing that shift? Well, terms limits went in in '90

BERGESON Well, I know I really did while I was the secretary of education because we felt it very strongly because we were watching closely because of our education issues that the governor had in the budget. And they were ignoring the governor's budget and putting in things that they wanted

YATES So this is mid- to late 90's?

BERGESON Yeah. So I mean you know? You knew it was not going to go anywhere because of the fact that you know the governor ultimately is going to make a decision on what stays in. If none of his programs are there, he's not even going to accept the budget, he'll return it. Or veto it and you

know return it to the legislature So there has to be an ongoing negotiation from the very beginning to understand where the give and take is going to occur and what the ultimate priorities are going to be

YATES Now I was going to ask you one other thing about Local Government You talked a little bit about Rose Ann Vuich but I was wondering if you could maybe talk a little bit more about She was vice chair of the committee and I don't know if there's anything you can talk about that in particular but maybe as her being the senior woman in the senate and how you saw her working especially maybe with agricultural issues If you have any things that you observed about her

BERGESON Well all of her decisions were based on what's good for Dinuba [Laughter] And would always be very very very very solicitous of the interests of her district I mean she fought for the interests and she was successful She was very good at it and people had a great deal of respect for her Everyone was aware that she was becoming ill and that

YATES When did that happen?

BERGESON It was a gradual process and there was you know a sense that this was happening but people were so fond of her that she was protected at all times I think it was probably one of the great tragedies to see what happened to Rose Ann because she was probably one of the most inspirational members of the senate that I know Certainly one that I had a

great deal of admiration and gratitude because she certainly showed me a lot in how to be a good member and how to take the process in a way that you could still enjoy it and still take it very seriously. She was a tremendous inspiration. And you know, she stayed on the committee for some time, and I served on a couple of committees with her. But you know, it was a gradual process. Eventually it was one that was noticeable at

YATES: I'm sure that's a difficult situation when somebody's not well. I'm sorry I keep kind of shifting here again, but that leads me to something I also wanted to ask you about, which was the Women's Caucus and what was going on once you got to the senate. Because we talked about its evolution or creation or whatever the appropriate terminology is in the assembly, and then I kind of cut you off at that point because we were focusing on those years. And I was wondering if you could now talk about the Women's Caucus—what form it was taking when you went into the senate and then over time while you were in the senate.

BERGESON: Well, I think probably when I went into the senate, the Women's Caucus was still pretty much a social club. I mean, we just met once a month, generally at one of the members' homes, and it was

YATES: And it was members of both the assembly and the senate, right?

BERGESON: Yeah. It was very much bipartisan. Very collegial and always we had a great time. Enjoyed very much the friendship that was offered because at

first there was so few of us you know unless you wanted to prow around the night spots with the male legislators or whatever they used to do [Laughter] And so it did it offered that collegiality that I think most of us really felt was important Then when I was in the senate and I believe it was probably pretty close to my first term there some issues came up that we felt strongly that maybe it was a good time for us to really organize in a way where we could feel that it was a caucus as such And the first issue that we addressed was insurance for child care and for preschool And that was because of the liability issues that no one would be willing to I mean they couldn't afford the high cost of insurance which was prohibiting a lot of child care centers from being in operation So we took that on And I remember we had kind of an argument with Senator John Seymour because he had a bill and he didn't want to give it up and we felt it should be a woman who had the bill and I think we all went on as principal co authors or what have you But anyway it was one where we were very successful And then another issue one that I carried was a bill that would prohibit free samples of cigarettes to be distributed in areas where children were accessible We had a little sting operation at one of the fairs and found out that they were giving out cigarettes to kids thirteen fourteen fifteen years old without ever asking for any identification and these kids would take them and were found smoking So it was a case where we had a good opportunity to take on the tobacco lobbyists which

were very very powerful in the legislature And that was an issue we went to Willie Brown on and Willie eventually agreed that they would The bill was signed which was pretty incredible because it was the first time we had ever beaten the tobacco lobbyists and there were about thirty five of them working against the bill It was pretty strong

YATES And when was that approximately?

BERGESON That was probably I'm trying to think when If I can put it in context with some of the other events Probably in '91 Somewhere in that general area

YATES OK

BERGESON 'Ninety one or '92

YATES So you brought this up though in connection with the Women's Caucus

BERGESON Yeah And then we took on other issues that had to do with mostly in the insurance Breast cancer was another one that we took up and we were able to get our male legislators finally to consent to some portion of the cigarette sales tax to go for breast cancer for mammograms for poor women and so forth There were quite a few issues actually that we were pretty successful at We had monthly meetings and I chaired the Women's Caucus

YATES I had in I think '92?

BERGESON OK That was

YATES I don't know if there was more than one year or you know but that was

what I saw

BERGESON Interesting because a lot of this of course is leading up to the dissolution of the Women's Caucus which was because of an event that happened to me

YATES Right I'd like you to talk about that but

BERGESON I recall we had some fallings out when I was chair because there were two women running against each other and it was about ready to split up the caucus Because it was when Lucy [Killea] and Carol Bentley were running against each other for the senate They were both in the assembly and then they squared off in the senate

YATES She was a staff person I believe Carol Bentley

BERGESON Yeah But she was elected to the No I guess maybe she wasn't in the assembly at that time Was it when she was I'm trying to remember how Carol Because I got to know Carol quite well and I'm trying to remember I was thinking she was in the assembly

YATES Well I might be remembering wrong but I thought that she hadn't been in state office She had worked for a state legislator and that that was where she was ¹

BERGESON Now you may be right because I just remember she

YATES But she was the Republican candidate

¹ Carol Bentley served in the California State Assembly during the 1989-1990 session representing El Cajon

BERGESON Was she not a member of the caucus? Well something happened where there was criticisms because of the kind of campaign that was going on And some of the Women s Caucus members And I remember saying This is something that will certainly divide us It just is not in keeping with the goals of the Women s Caucus We kind of had an unsaid commitment that we would not involve ourselves in campaigns Because realizing that ultimately

YATES That would turn into partisan

BERGESON It would become partisan to the point where you become very personally involved in it We were starting to have some problems within the caucus over that And I remember we had a meeting and anyway we got through that OK and we were really trying to You know I remember meeting with several of the Democrats and we decided it was too important We didn t want to have things break up

YATES Split the caucus

BERGESON Yeah on something like that And so the caucus had really kind of regained its strength and was going well and I m trying to remember who was to We had already elected officers I think for the next year And then about that time Governor Wilson appointed me as superintendent of public instruction And this came about as a result of Bill Honig who was convicted and had to step down

YATES This is 93 right?

BERGESON Yeah So that was right after I was chair I think of the caucus If I remember right

YATES It sounds right because I have you were chair of the caucus in '92 and then the nomination for superintendent was in '93

BERGESON Yeah So that's about the way it probably worked And I've forgotten what month it was that he nominated me And I remember you know at the time it was not a job I sought frankly because I had real questions about the whole governance issue of California and I felt that there was too much fragmentation Bill Honig had been somebody that I had really supported strongly in his election but during the time that he was in office he became very confrontational with the governor and it had been extremely difficult because then it became partisan And again I hated to see education become so partisan

YATES Right and that position's supposed to be nonpartisan

BERGESON And frankly I felt some very negative feelings and it caused a lot of problems with the Deukmejian administration on education issues that I felt actually detracted from what we were trying to do

YATES You're talking about Honig and working

BERGESON With Honig's impact yeah So frankly when the position became available I was also on the short list for the treasurer because I think they just wanted a woman there You know they needed to have one woman when Tom Hayes got the job But you know

YATES Wait who s Tom Hayes?

BERGESON Tom Hayes was the one Governor Deukmejian appointed as treasurer

YATES It wasn t [Daniel L] Dan Lungren? No

BERGESON Oh yeah

YATES It was Dan Lungren

BERGESON It was Dan Lungren He was turned up That s right Oh see You helped shape me up here

YATES That s OK So just for chronological sake because I want to come back to the Women s Caucus and get into more of these other things but Jesse Unruh died I guess it was 88 or 89 I don t

BERGESON Yeah

YATES And then I know you were on the short list for the treasurer position

BERGESON Right

YATES And Dan Lungren

BERGESON Dan was the one that was selected I remember Ken Maddy was all bent out of shape and Bob Beverly and of course I figured I was just there to kind of pad that you know?

YATES Why were they bent out of shape about that?

BERGESON Because they really wanted it

YATES They wanted you to be on?

BERGESON No Ken really wanted it badly

YATES Oh they really wanted to be treasurer?

BERGESON Yeah he wanted it very badly and I think it was very disappointing to him that he was not selected

YATES OK and then why do you think you were on the list?

BERGESON Well I think they felt it was because they didn't have a woman

[End Tape 5 Side B]

[Begin Tape 6 Side A]

YATES How interested were you in being treasurer?

BERGESON Well you know I thought it would be a challenge I was always up for a challenge I've always said that you become your greatest limitation If you think you can't do it you can't do it And I thought well certainly if I were to be appointed I'm sure I could do a good job of it

YATES But that quickly went on I mean Dan Lungren was appointed

BERGESON Yeah yeah

YATES So we were talking about Bill Honig and the Deukmejian administration and then Honig leaves because he has to

BERGESON Right And so Wilson has been elected and of course he has the opportunity of appointing a constitutional officer which was probably one of the few opportunities that any governor would have of providing that access to someone without having to go through the election

YATES They could choose to have a special election right? Or no for a constitutional officer?

BERGESON Yeah In fact you could wait until the next general election

YATES OK and just leave it open?

BERGESON Yeah That was an option yeah

YATES But I would think a governor would want to try to get an appointee in

BERGESON Take the opportunity to give that appointment And so anyway he did I talked to him about it You know I gave him some of my views on education which he was very supportive of And I frankly told him This is probably one of things I would want to do is to eliminate the job Because I didn't really feel that The power existed for the superintendent because there was no role for the superintendent in the budget process other than just a bully pulpit And as far as the whole budget process you know unless you could be influential with the legislators you had no vote And other than running a department which was so massive And I thought the first thing I would want is an internal audit of the state department of education because I had been so critical of a lot of the operations of the bureaucracy And I felt it was an opposite Frankly it held a lot of problems and so [Laughter] I think he probably liked the idea that there would be more scrutiny for the bureaucracy and what needed to be done Anyway I know Becky wanted the job too and I think she was disappointed that she didn't get it and I didn't particularly want it but I

YATES What was the level of her background in education?

BERGESON Well she had taken over this job as the

YATES Vice chair of Ed[ucation]

BERGESON Vice chair And I think because of Silicon Valley the interest in education there and more technologically oriented

YATES I just didn't know whether she had much of an education background

BERGESON Not particularly She had a master's Becky was extremely intelligent She had a master's from Stanford [University] an M B A She worked in banking primarily I think with Bank of America One of the banks anyway

YATES But anyway you were saying she was maybe interested in the superintendent position?

BERGESON Yeah I think she probably wanted it more than I did But the governor appointed me and the first thing I did was go over and talk to Willie Brown He told me—he was very honest—I don't intend to have any Republican constitutional officer as long as I'm speaker of the assembly ' And I thought well you know [I was] probably overly confident and felt I could win them over And I felt certainly I'll have the women to go along with me on this because I'd always felt that we'd sort of In fact I had a call from several of the women congratulating [me] and thought it was just wonderful you know? Some of those that spoke the loudest against me ultimately But I think the initial reaction was It's great There had never been a woman in public instruction and this is a great opportunity And viewing of course that there would be an election

coming up and if they wanted to run a candidate that was fine. I had heard that Delaine Eastin was interested in the job. She'd been chairing the assembly Education Committee and so I felt that she probably would be interested. And I thought, Well, I need to go around and I talked to every single member of the assembly. I made a personal call on each one of them. I couldn't get any commitments out of any of the women and so I began to wonder what was going on. And then one by one I heard the comments that were made in the paper and there were outrageous comments about some right wing conservative and that I wanted to destroy education, put creationism back in the schools. I mean, all kinds of things and I just thought, where is this coming from? And so Willie Brown had his research committee going out and looking at bills that I had voted on in the last twenty years or something. Some of them on non concurrence votes or where you'd have several versions, you know, and they would go. But I mean, it was just really trumped up. And it made me angry. And then I just thought, This is so wrong. You just can't do this. So we started going around to all the editorial boards and I had editorial endorsements to start out and then all of a sudden they started feeding the seeds of all this—the fact that I was anti education, pro voucher and everything. And I thought, How can they get away with it? Because I had worked as hard as I had with so many legislators and been constructive in all the efforts and very, very pro education. So it was

getting hurtful. And then I thought, Well, we'll see what happens. They had a committee that was organized to make a recommendation to the full assembly. See, I had to get two-thirds vote in both the assembly and the senate—this was required for a constitutional officer. Well, I had the votes in the senate. I didn't have to worry, so I

YATES But the assembly was the

BERGESON Yeah, I wasn't going to even bother asking the senate to do it unless I was successful in the assembly because no need putting them through all this. So I got before the committee, and I mean, it was what you would expect. The Democrats came down on all this stuff, and Delaine was very, very aggressive. And, of course, she was masterminding the entire thing, knowing that she wanted to run, and it didn't create any nice feelings during this process.

YATES Right.

BERGESON And, unfortunately, B. T. Collins was the one that was working on it for me, and he died.

YATES That's right.

BERGESON He was the one that was kind of my contact person and was there to help me through the process, and losing him was—because people had such respect for him on both sides—of course, a real blow to the efforts to try to build any kind of. Though I don't think it really would have made any difference because Willie made it a leadership vote. I mean, it was

very apparent And during the confirmation the hearings I mean the committee was bad enough but when I got to the assembly floor this had been an election where a lot of new women had come in It must have been right after Because there were some that I didn't know they had come in very early

YATES Yeah because if the nomination was '93 then there would have been an election in '92

BERGESON Yeah And there were a lot of new women that I had never worked with but I did go around and talk to each one of them

YATES This is in the assembly?

BERGESON Yeah I spent time talking to each one of them you know and tried to get them to understand the positions and tried to combat some of the accusations that were being made I remember talking to Jackie Speier because Jackie had always been someone who had been so encouraging And we'd worked together on a number of issues and spent time mobilizing forces on some of the Women's Caucus issues and so forth So I got the indication when I talked to Jackie that it was probably not going to be a done deal that there were pressures that were going to be brought to bear that probably were not going to let it happen

And so when I got to the floor vote I knew they'd had a lot of caucus meetings and we were always able to get some information from the caucus because of some of the Democrats that I knew in the senate

and I guess there were a couple [Phillip] Phil Isenberg spoke up for me and he said This is all wrong but some of them actually left the room rather than vote against me—that I d worked with Steve Peace was one He wouldn t be part of the caucus deliberations and would not vote at the time But I mean here was John Vasconcellos who we had had all these wonderful conversations on you know kids and what we could do to improve the quality of life for poor communities and everything and worked very closely I even carried his Esteem Bill on the senate floor and he came up to me with this kind of trumped up you know? I remember I just turned around and said John we ve known each other fifteen years I said You know you don t believe that and I walked away

YATES You said trumped up What was he saying to you?

BERGESON Oh he was saying that I believed in prayer in the schools or I was trying to John we have never even voted on things like that And I said A moment of silence? I wouldn t have a problem with would you? And he said Absolutely and that sort of thing But then I decided that I would go over and watch the floor debate In fact there was a picture on the front page of every paper with these two—I can t remember who they were Well one was Stan Statham and he s like 6 foot 2 and then the other fellow was a former sheriff I ve forgotten He s in all the pictures so you d But here I am little Marian Bergeson [Laughter] with these two

bodyguards. But I sat there during most of the deliberations and to hear these women get up and rail and just pounce on me. I mean, it was cruel. And I remember I just couldn't believe it. Finally I walked off. I said, "I don't need any more of this," and to this day I have not been able to watch the tapes. I mean, it was just—I'd asked to have them just so I could. I had several women that came up to me, one of them in tears afterwards saying that it was the worst thing that she's ever had to do. During my confirmation my last time around Martha [M.] Escutia gave a rather—in fact, it actually brought tears to my eyes about how she had railed against me and the terrible things that she said about me and then I helped her and she said, "If I had been [Bergeson] I would have told [me] to go to hell," but she didn't tell me to go to hell. She helped me do for my district. And then John Vasconcellos wrote me a real long letter afterwards about how it had bothered him and he felt like, you know, it was not the sort of thing he should have done for his own credibility, so.

YATES: I'm sorry to interrupt, but why do you think that Willie Brown was able to rally that kind of consensus amongst those

BERGESON: He was speaker of the house. He controls committees, appointments, fund raising. I mean, he has that kind of power. In your caucus, if you make this a leadership position, then you know, you're saying you don't support the speaker. And it's pretty strong. In fact, I mean, that's why I think Cathie Wright—there were so few of us Republicans left—refused

to attend any of the caucus meetings after that

YATES The Women's Caucus?

BERGESON The Women's Caucus. And at that time there were very few women

There was Barbara Alby and I've forgotten. Oh, gosh

YATES I'd have to look at the

BERGESON Yeah. I can't remember who the women Republicans

YATES Were at that point?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Well, Becky Morgan was there, right, still?

BERGESON Yeah. See, Becky was on the other side. I mean she was

YATES Right, but you're talking about the assembly?

BERGESON Yeah, this was only the assembly vote, and there were

YATES I'm trying to think who else was there. The only names that come to mind
are Cathie Wright and

BERGESON Well, Cathie was the one that said she wouldn't attend any more of the
caucus meetings. And with that, I mean, she just kind of wrote letters to
all of the. I think she wrote that considering the partisanship that was
demonstrated that she felt that there was no longer a viable Women's
Caucus because if women couldn't get together. And then the
Republican women in the assembly were never that active anyway.
They'd sort of felt that they didn't want to be part of it.

YATES So what happened after—I want to talk a little bit more about this, the

whole nomination [process]—but what happened to the Women s Caucus then after this?

BERGESON Well after that it was gone

YATES Did it disintegrate?

BERGESON Yeah I think they ve been trying to revive it I don t even know what the status is now But that pretty well eliminated any participation because as I think Cathie wrote them and she said ' You know you have your Democrat women s caucus It s no longer a bipartisan Women s Caucus And so that was the thing And I don t know whether they continued with the caucus position of the Democrats or not

YATES Now maybe you can clarify this and I don t know if this is the precipitating event or not but at one point there was discussion right of creating a Republican women s caucus and a Democratic women s caucus?

BERGESON That never occurred during the time that I was there

YATES Was there discussion of it at the time you were there?

BERGESON No There was no need for it

YATES OK There weren t enough of you?

BERGESON Well it was a different combination though during that period of time You know Sally Tanner who came down came and walked precincts for me in my districts

YATES Right I remember you mentioning her

BERGESON And it was a very social collegial group I mean we recognized there

were differences and in those issues we just didn't care to get into any discussions. I really had nothing to do with the caucus after that obviously and it was never even discussed in my presence. And then Cathie copied me on the letters that she sent to the caucus saying that no longer was there a viable caucus without I mean bipartisan you know? The Democrats wanted to have their own. And there were so few Republicans because we sort of dropped our numbers. And that's been one of the concerns I've had. Where are all these Republican women who should be running for office? You know highly qualified great contributors. But I just don't know what happened after that.

YATES Because I thought I'd read that some place but I can't remember where that was mentioned at some point.

BERGESON It might have been. Yeah.

YATES But maybe that never became something that actually went before the caucus.

BERGESON I don't think so.

YATES Well I would like to ask you maybe a couple more questions about the nomination process because And I'm sorry I was looking through my notes. Oh here it is. And I wanted to talk a little bit more about how the Democrats in the assembly were making these statements about you and what your viewpoints were on things. And I did see one in the L A Times an article saying that the process had put you in the position of

denying charges that you were a racist and would introduce biblical doctrine of creationism in the public schools etc And I'm wondering where did this come from? Why

BERGESON It was all just manufactured by virtue of the Well one of the ways Willie Brown was very upset because when I served on the PERS Committee I did not support the divestiture of funds in the South African economies And the reason was I felt that your fiduciary responsible for pension funds because you're protecting the interests of the employees who have money there And I didn't think the social policy And I still have some problems with that I mean as far as making decisions you know that may not be fiscally prudent to prove a point If I had money invested I would want to make sure that the investments were being done to the best interest of the return on the investment rather than whether they're going to you know show a cause Willie was very upset about that So that's where I was racist and that's where he brought that out in that particular incident But when it came to any of the programs I Most of my efforts when I was in the legislature was for low income kids minority kids A lot of the education programs that we tried were to try to uplift schools In fact I had a bill that I thought was great which was combat pay for teachers to go into these under served areas because they couldn't get teachers that had experience to go into these difficult situations and I felt Now in fact some of these are now proposals by

[Governor] Gray Davis but that was one that the teacher s unions defeated But no I think that people that knew me that being a racist was just simply And introducing creationism was just You know I don t know where they got that

YATES At what point in this whole process did it kind of come home to you that this is going to be more difficult than you thought?

BERGESON Well I began to see from just what I was reading from the newspapers And the comments that were being made and Willie s press conferences you know? He said This is a done deal No Republican s ever going to be given an appointment " But he also made comments about he had suffered with this because I know there had been a tremendous outpouring of support and there were telephone trees set up all over the state you know to get them to support the confirmation And there was a tremendous amount of pressure with a lot of groups because I had built up a pretty good support while I was in the legislature and a lot of people that knew me could see how ridiculous a lot of this was Of course a lot of the Orange County people were furious and had all kinds of comments to make as far as the process had allowed this sort of thing to happen And of course Willie took a focus on this I mean he was getting a lot of it He was bearing a lot of the brunt of this He made it clear it was not a pleasant thing for him either

YATES Well you said you talked to members of the assembly individually and

obviously you had a lot of support and things were going on regardless probably of whether you initiated them or not but what did you think you could do to combat this?

BERGESON Oh I just thought if people [Laughter] knew who and what I was it would make a difference And you know giving them the right information and telling them something about my background and history and what I had been doing I had taught at an all minority school I mean you know I had given my all for kids that And that's where some of the urban legislators were coming down and I just thought Well probably if they knew the truth it would make a difference And I thought particularly with the women And that I think was probably the biggest disappointment to me because they were the ones that And I think it was choreographed so that it would be the women who would take the greatest role as far as giving the appearance that it was the women that were opposed to me because that would deflect some from Willie himself It's the women that don't want her not us gentlemen

YATES Right Well I saw also in an article that I don't know during part of this process that the CTA didn't take a stance but then they did come out against you And how much of an impact or you know you talked before about the Education Committee and the influence of the union and the teachers association and I'm just wondering what your perspective was on that their taking that position?

BERGESON Well you know you get a call from somebody particularly if it's the speaker saying "I want you to take a position I mean they're going to do that In fact even the school boards association I've been president of the California School Boards Association I expected to get support

YATES They didn't support you?

BERGESON They didn't even attend you know? I mean they were very much invisible during that But no almost every education group came out in opposition and it was very clear it had all been orchestrated Some of those had given me support I mean CTA had actually endorsed me in one of my elections I was one of the few Republicans they ever did But almost every organization there You know it was obvious that it was pretty much They all said the same thing I mean they all had the same arguments the same prepared statement and they emanated from the same place And it was Rick Simpson who had been the speaker's education aide who had done all this through his research efforts And he knew it wasn't true because we worked with him In fact on bilingual education we had actually helped the speaker with a bill to try to make it a decent bill and worked directly with Rick Simpson And yet they organized all the Latino groups against me and got every activist Hispanic group they had out there That I again was a racist and you know denying poor kids an education and all those things

YATES Well the only other question I wanted to ask you about that was what

was your interaction with Pete Wilson and his office during all of this?

BERGESON Well they were offering all the help they could They were doing everything they could and he personally was making calls doing everything No I mean I had full support from Republicans and from the Democrats on the senate side Teresa Hughes said she was willing to go over and testify on my behalf you know? David Robert I think in my farewell comments You know when they talk about when you leave You're always wonderful when you leave But he said the greatest mistake made was seeing the way the Democrats treated me in the assembly He said he was embarrassed for Democrats and I think You know I heard that from practically every Democrat Tom Hayden was the first one to send me a letter that he would have supported me for confirmation had it come before the senate And so I mean there were I don't think that I would have had any opposition in the senate We would have had the same interest groups Several suggested 'Well why don't you come? We can at least make it balanced " I said Why would I want to put them through that having all these interests groups that are their people? You know I just felt nothing would be gained by it and

YATES You mean going over to the senate?

BERGESON Yeah just having a hearing just to get the confirmation through the senate But as I say it was time wasted And you know no point of embarrassing them from people that they have to look to support from as

well

YATES It sounds incredibly difficult. Must have been a tough time.

BERGESON Well, as I say, after months of therapy, I can finally talk about it.

[Laughter]

YATES Well, it's nice of you to talk about it. But I mean, it's good to get your perspective too. Everybody has their perspective and it's good to get yours.

BERGESON It's one of those times I'd just soon forget. And I remember I was on a I guess we were in San Diego, and [Deirdre] Dede 'Alpert and Lucy Killea and I were all there representing. It was one of the women's groups. I think it was a women's conference or something. And they were talking about your best and your worst experiences, and I shared the pain.

[Laughter]

YATES I know it must be painful to talk about, but I think it's good to talk about these things and

BERGESON Well, it does show that when it comes to the political process, nothing is sacred and there's no such thing as true allegiance. I mean, it doesn't exist. When you're in a heavily charged, hardball political atmosphere where there's a lot of political capital at stake, you know, it doesn't always bring out the best in people. But there has to be a reality check of what you have to go through in a system that's designed to try to provide for checks

and balances and eventually it may work out. But I think oftentimes it doesn't work out not because of us but in spite of us, you know? This system I think is designed to. We have term limits which for right or for wrong has adjusted some of the problems but it has also created a whole new set of problems.

YATES Right

BERGESON And I think every stage that you go through when you correct something that's going to be your next year's problem because it's constantly trying to readjust and when you readjust something you cause an imbalance some place else. And you know that's what I've seen throughout my legislative career is the constant readjustment. After Prop 13 we developed all of these assessment districts. Mello Roos¹ benefit assessment landscaping lighting all of these various ways of making money for local government that can't go back to the process that it was designed to provide through voter acceptance and so consequently you then have to look at the inequities at houses that are built with Mello Roos as opposed to those that don't and we see those in bond elections now. In fact they're selling houses. No Mello Roos. You know that's a great attraction to buying a new home now you don't have all those assessments. So how do you get rid of those and try to provide for the

1 S B 2001 1981 1982 Reg Sess Cal Stat ch 1439 (1982)

right of infrastructure to be developed? That's where I think local government is in a constant change. We're always interim because you're moving from something that you created to try to solve that problem to get out from under that to create something that's going to be more equitable for the future and I guess it's a revolving process.

YATES Right. Well, I imagine Prop. 13 really made things particularly difficult with

BERGESON Well, it has, and yet you know, I served on I don't know how many committees and commissions to try to look at what do you do now with Prop. 13. And of course, we're beneficiaries. We've lived in our house. I mean, probably if we had to pay now what it would cost for property taxes on the property we couldn't live here, and I think a lot of seniors you'll find that are retired on a fixed income would find themselves there for the very reason that Prop. 13 came about. Because they suddenly readjusted property taxes after Prop. 20 passed, which was this huge impact on coastal property because you had seniors living in a mobile home park where they suddenly had to pay, you know, ten times what they were paying. Well, there's no way that they can maintain their home and their standard of living. And so when they say, "Gee, you've got a \$15 billion budget surplus up there and yet we're being priced out of our home," something's wrong.

YATES Right

BERGESON So I don't know I think you know it's a forever process

[End Tape 6 Side A]

[Session 5 July 5 2000]

[Begin Tape 7 Side A]

YATES So I wanted to come back to activities when you were in the state senate and I thought we could focus on a couple of issues during that time and that you mentioned to me were important one is water and the other is transportation So first I was hoping you could describe what was occurring in terms of concerns about water issues in your district and then what was happening at the state level perhaps with a focus on the Ag and Water Resources Committee which you were a member of

BERGESON The district that I had just really started representing was primarily Well it was a combination of issues really but in the southern most part of the district which was Imperial County and actually parts of San Diego [County] and Riverside County water was an extremely important issue as was agriculture Obviously the two are very much interwoven

YATES Sure

BERGESON But the issues of water related primarily to a county that had more water than what they really used and that was Imperial County where much of the water was actually draining into the Salton Sea and so in a sense it

was a surplus Well San Diego was an import county where they had to import about 90 percent of their water and so there had been discussions for many years as far as water transfers lining the canals in Imperial County In fact probably the most powerful entity within Imperial County was the Imperial Irrigation District—much more powerful and greater authority really for land use than the Board of Supervisors And so we worked closely with the Imperial Irrigation District to see what could be done We had numerous meetings there also with the International Boundary [and Water Commission] At that time they had a combination group that were looking at issues related to Mexico California and of course Mexicali and Calexico were very much a part of that because for all practical purposes they're one city that are split in half by countries And of course immigration figured into this but that was tied more to the agricultural interests while water was the supplier that kept the whole county flourishing and allowed them to be as productive and progressive in agricultural issues

But the problems of water transfers became very real because the farmers or the ranchers in Imperial County were concerned about losing their water They felt that also it was going into the Salton Sea which was also another resource and whether that resource would be depleted by virtue of transferring that water for other uses The water is very brackish down there they have a lot of ground water but that's not usable

YATES I was going to say when you said that Imperial County had a surplus of water what does that mean?

BERGESON Well they didn't consider it a surplus. They had a large portion of the Colorado River [Storage] Project and they had a direct entitlement to that and that's primarily where their water came from and it's a good source of agricultural water. It's more brackish or not as potable but I mean they did use it extensively for agricultural purposes. And then with the water that was flowing in from Mexico through the New River which surprisingly was flowing north as opposed to most people thinking rivers flowing south but it actually flowed into Imperial County from Mexico. That meant that there was a continuing source of water available though highly polluted.

YATES OK

BERGESON And so the issue was if they were to line the canals in Imperial County that there would be more water then for transfer because it wouldn't be seeping into the ground and they could take that water and use it and sell it to San Diego County. At that time I think the water was selling for \$8 an acre foot which was just incredibly inexpensive compared to other parts of the state which are up to \$30 \$40 per acre foot.

And so because of that issue then we became very much involved. I chaired the Subcommittee on Water Marketing because then there was a strong feeling throughout the state that we should perhaps make water

more marketable. In other words, put a more competitive use on it so that there would be more conservation. And of course, the water wars between the north and the south are traditionally well known. And the south was continually trying to achieve greater parity as far as water distribution and of course, the north was very protective of their interests. So water became a vital issue, not only to the county but regionally as well. So it was an important committee assignment and

YATES: So what kinds of things were you able to actually enact or even not do that you wanted to do through this Water Marketing Subcommittee?

BERGESON: Well, to this day the issues are the same, they still have not been resolved. I think there have been continuing discussions and I understand they were very close. I don't know whether it was finally consummated in this legislative session. More discussion on the transfer where San Diego could achieve. Of course, the 800 pound gorilla in all of this was the Metropolitan Water District [MWD] and there were a lot of issues and concerns over the small water companies versus Metropolitan and how they were going to be able to maintain their contracts and having sufficient water at the same time. I mean, it's a system where you take out from one source [and] somebody's going to get less. And of course, no one wants to get less. And unless you increase the source. That's always been difficult to do. At one time, in fact, one of the early efforts when I was first elected was the thought of desalinization through nuclear

power And that never materialized because nuclear power became so controversial that it was thought that there would never be any further nuclear power plants built which has pretty much been the case

YATES But there have been other ideas right about desalinization?

BERGESON Well actually we did get into it and I carried legislation relating to San Diego on reclamation projects where they could reuse—recycle—water And of course for commercial use—golf courses recreational areas—reclamation has been a very viable alternative And those issues have been developed and implemented throughout California Now there's always some concern as far as the degree of the quality control because there's not only an issue of quantity there's the issue of quality Water quality of course has always been a primary concern particularly where you get into water that's potable and how you're going to maintain the necessary control for the purity factor

YATES Well I'm sort of reading into what you said regarding this Water Marketing Subcommittee that you weren't really able to accomplish much

BERGESON Those issues are just not accomplished You know when you have a drought people are tuned into water and as soon as you get a good rainstorm then people lose interest It's that sort of chronic problem that really gets neglected until it's a crisis And unfortunately water will continue to be so because it's too controversial for legislators to really

resolve in a way where someone has to give and someone has to be able to take more in order to satisfy the needs. We have the largest part of the population in southern California and you have the largest portion of water in northern California.

YATES: Who were the main entities that were against any of the ideas that you had—when I say “you,” I really mean the committee—in terms of trying to make it more equitable?

BERGESON: Well, when you go down to Imperial County and start talking about water that was time for people to pick up the shotguns. [Laughter] I mean, it was just

YATES: I imagine there’s a heavy-duty lobbying effort.

BERGESON: Yeah.

YATES: is what I’m trying to get at.

BERGESON: You get into huge efforts by the interests. Water interests are probably one of the key interests throughout the state, and every time you have a Well, a conference committee oftentimes would try to address the issue and bring together the forces and try to come up with a resolve on water distribution. Marketing, of course, came in very strong after I My committee, I think, was one that set some discussion, but it ultimately fell to the power brokers within the legislature, and that’s usually the governor and the leadership and the lobbyists working together. And the problems are often resolved, only to be opened and reopened and renegotiated the

following year and that will continue. I don't think that you'll ever find that the issue of water and/or agriculture will ever be completely resolved because the dynamics are changing, land use policies are changing, water needs are changing. Technology is continually changing not only the distribution but the method and assurance that we can have high quality water that can be made safe to drink.

YATES And you mentioned as part of the idea of marketing was conservation also.

BERGESON Right.

YATES of resources. And what about that area? Were there any efforts that were successful in that?

BERGESON Well, one thing I found out that it isn't water per se, it's the cost of conveying it that's expensive. In other words, the infrastructure that has to support it. How do you convey it from one area to another? And who owns the conveyance then becomes the all-powerful determiner of how it's going to be distributed. And so the effort was then to have a certain level that say with the MWD they would be responsible for and then above that capacity would be utilized to sell to. And other marketers or contractors could come in then and utilize. So it was a question of defining the infrastructure, who owned it, repairing rights. I mean those rights are going to constantly be fought because as rivers change course and as they. The whole issue of the distribution of how water winds its

way and hopefully south at some point in time who owns the rights to that water becomes a contention And that will continue to be fought in the courts for years and years

YATES You mentioned what was going on in Imperial County and I think I sidetracked you for a second You were talking about a surplus " an idea that it was going into the Salton Sea Is that correct?

BERGESON Because they didn't have lined canals that it was seeping back into the ground water system And they have a very high ground water table there

YATES Correct me if I'm wrong but part of the concern was that if they diverted that water for example transferred it to San Diego County that that would be taking away from going into the Salton Sea and that that was bad

BERGESON Right

YATES OK

BERGESON It was kind of a complex issue at one time because one of the farmers down there had his land flooded and it was simply because the surplus or the water the runoff was causing havoc to his property It was submerged most of the time and of course a lot of this was because of the location near the Salton Sea Because what the Salton Sea became was a repository for drain off and it just continued to accumulate the drained off waters And so he and his family were suing in order to get the water contained in such a way which led into the whole issue of lining

the canals and making a better source than could be made available for other users or to be sold to other users And interestingly that then became a huge battle between the Salton Sea folks who had built their industry literally their tackle shops and their little restaurants on the banks of the Salton Sea

YATES To attract tourists or

BERGESON To attract It was a tourist attraction which of course was their livelihood And many of these were retirees or the snowbirds as they called them They would be coming through and they would stay there during the winter months because the winter in Imperial County's a beautiful place It's what people really crave when they want to go and bask and relax and have a wonderful climate to live in And that was pretty well being diminished by diverting any of the Salton Sea the drainage waters elsewhere And so there was a huge battle going on there So you had a number of constituencies and I remember going down and meeting with them and they were very very upset There were people that were ready to string me up I think to die [Laughter]

YATES I remember I think you mentioned [that] when you were describing that district when you first started how you went down there and they wouldn't even shake your hand at the beginning

BERGESON Yeah and that was very much the attitude You know they simply were very upset and they wanted everyone to know it and they eventually went

to Sacramento and tried to have their wishes known there to protect their rights to what they figured was their property rights

YATES So what happened in that particular case?

BERGESON Nothing. It really hasn't changed a great deal and, as I say, the battles continue as far as the pollution of the New River. I don't think they've resolved that. I think that U.S. senators have tried to. They may have formed a better discussion level. I mean, I think that when the economy's strong, it's easier because Imperial County traditionally has had one of the highest unemployment rates of any county and a lot of it is because of migration from Mexico and as soon as the crops are no longer a job. I mean, if they don't have employment after farm work, then, of course, there's a high level of [un]employment. And they've had problems; they had what they call the white fly, which came in and it was really threatening the entire agricultural crop there. At one time they had been heavily involved with cattle and then, of course, the beef industry was suffering—people weren't eating as much beef and that had a direct impact. So they've had tremendous economic problems, which has always detoured somewhat from finding a solution because there was so much of a concern just on being able to survive, really. And as the economy has strengthened and as things have been on an upswing, then I think it's a more realistic time to really get people down to a more negotiable attitude to be able to resolve many of these problems.

YATES Well you mentioned San Diego and Riverside and you did talk a little bit about San Diego and the fact that they transferred—if that's the right word—about 90 percent of their water

BERGESON They import yeah

YATES Sorry they import it

BERGESON they import about 90 percent of their water and of course that means that they have to find other And when you have a serious drought in California San Diego is threatened their avocado industry and a lot of those that are very dependent upon a high level of water During the last drought I mean it was a very very serious problem for them And of course then the talks become much more concentrated when there is a serious problem literally resolving itself you know in a time of crisis The problem is oftentimes in crisis you find intermediate steps that don't really solve the problem They may take care of it for the time but they don't solve the long term problems

YATES Now what was the situation with Riverside County?

BERGESON Riverside did not have the same problems because they again were part of the Colorado River distribution entitlement Their issues were different because their water was from a different source and they had their entitlement They have the Colorado River Board [of California]

YATES Right That's right

BERGESON And they were on the distribution formula San Diego because of the fact

that they don't have groundwater they didn't have other sources they couldn't go I mean even their chances for reclamation were not as good When we worked with Fallbrook which is part of the district that I represented they were heavily involved in reclamation and trying very hard then to move forward into many areas where they could make the maximum use of the water that they had available to them

YATES In fact I think having driven down there I've seen signs near Fallbrook on the side of the road about using reclaimed water

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Is that a word? Reclamation anyway as part of irrigation in that area

BERGESON And much of that came into being while I was representing that district and we worked with the Fallbrook [Public Utilities] District and the other water districts in the area And then chairing Local Government Committee which I did we got into a lot of these special districts and of course a lot of those are water districts and so we worked closely with them as well

YATES I hadn't quite realized until I saw an article in the L A Times recently how many special districts there are and how complicated that is

BERGESON They're very complicated and I know one of the areas

YATES Especially in terms of oversight

BERGESON we got very involved with as well We'd just eliminate the redundancy of these special districts but when you realize that many of

these districts have had to invest heavily in the infrastructure and many have outstanding bonds and you know the repayment of those bonds are vital. You have to maintain the integrity of the revenue system in order to make sure that they're going to be paid and that means that you have an authority to collect those. In other words it's not all simply that if you

YATES Eliminate?

BERGESON suddenly merge all the districts all the problems are going to go away because they each have their own little individual revenue source and you have to protect that to the extent that the revenues that are necessary to rebuild will be protected

YATES This is a slight sidestep but I realized of course that when you were in the assembly the Peripheral Canal was [under] discussion and I'm trying to remember it's like '80 '81 isn't it? I have to look at my time line

BERGESON I worked with Ruben [S] Ayala. In fact he was my seatmate for a while in the senate. Because of the interest that I had in taking on districts. And we had interests of course throughout Orange County where water was again a very important issue. It was not the issue of top concern of the district at that time as much as it was when I was representing Imperial County and that part of San Diego County. But the Peripheral Canal you know was very hotly debated and of course I just figured from living in southern California that it was kind of a no brainer. Well of course we should have water. [Laughter] We provided the economic

thrust you know that was keeping the California engine going and if they were to take away the water not allow us the water then the whole state would dry up or the money would dry up that kept the state in business And then of course I found out what it was really like You find in northern California that the feelings were strong [geographically] but it wasn't partisan It had nothing to do with anything except you know

This is our water and you can't have it [Laughter]

YATES So it really became northern versus southern California?

BERGESON It was you know almost a civil war when you would start taking on water issues

YATES What do you remember about the discussions that occurred over the Peripheral Canal?

BERGESON Well that they were very heated I mean it was probably one of the most controversial issues to hit the state legislature I think every year you know that any type of effort to restore whether it's a Peripheral Canal or whether it was some other source or some other method or technology that would pull water away from the northern part I mean you know they had built the canal and the aqueduct which was a way of doing it but any further In fact another factor of this too was San Francisco because San Francisco for environmental reasons wanted to have the flow of water to be able to maintain the ecosystem they thought was important And so they also wanted a good shot of whatever portion [of] the runoff And

that's where most of the northern California water comes from. It's just from the snow runoff and the amount of water that comes through because of the tremendous amount of moisture they have there during the winter months. But we continually tried to stress—and this went on with the committee—we need to develop the capacity for storage. And of course that was expensive, so how do you do that? They wanted to build. The Auburn Dam became highly controversial.

YATES: I remember that. Yes. And that came up again a few years ago.

BERGESON: And that continued to come up because it's a way of storing. Well, of course then you get into the battle. The same thing with the wild rivers which at that time there was an effort to try to capture some of the. You know, not conservation but for storage purposes to pick up some of the water from the rivers. Well, of course the environmentalists were totally opposed. So I mean you have a lot of opposing interests that are all working to try to maintain and protect their interests as you do with anything. But when it comes to water, it's the one thing that people have to have; they can't survive without it. I mean, whether it's your agricultural interests or whether it's, you know, just human consumption essentially.

YATES: I realize this is before your time in the legislature, but perhaps you can tell me your opinion if you have one as to why during the [Edmund G.] Pat' Brown [Sr.] administration, for example, it was successful? They were able to get a major water plan through. What do you think has happened?

BERGESON Well you know mainly just people and

YATES It's a different time

BERGESON the development Right And the fact that there has been a reluctance on the part of the public to commit the capital to the necessary infrastructure facilities And it's much more difficult now to try to build because of the high cost I mean during those days too labor was relatively I shouldn't say cheap " but I mean it was do-able and now because of the high cost of litigation the problems that you have They didn't have EIRs [environmental impact reports] in those days and they didn't have a lot of the mitigation

YATES I was wondering about how CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act]

BERGESON Yeah See you didn't have those And they probably under today's setting couldn't have built those We certainly would never have built any of the nuclear facilities and for a while you know those looked like a viable option and of course then that was ruled out And so it has been with many of the "solutions and maybe for the right reasons I mean we don't know Whenever you invest in something that is new you never really know until you've had the time-tested effect

YATES Well regulations have brought positive things

BERGESON Right

YATES but made it also difficult to accomplish things

BERGESON Yeah And just your legal responsibilities that you have to go through Liability is tremendous now and that will continue to be a big problem You know liability is one of the most difficult things that you have to deal with particularly when you get into construction work and things of that type So it's much more difficult and I have always been very impressed with what happened during that era You know like people look to Franklin Roosevelt and what he did in being able to really get some things done but at that time and place the time is right and you needed the leadership to do it

Just as an aside I had a call last Was it yesterday? Yeah it was yesterday It was Marian? This is Jerry Brown [Laughter]

YATES Really?

BERGESON I thought Jerry Brown? Yeah [Laughter]

YATES That Jerry Brown?

BERGESON Yeah that Jerry Brown [Laughter] Yeah Well after he had talked about three minutes it was Jerry Brown It was really funny but he was lobbying me on a charter school trying to get it in Oakland But what was funny is he said which reminded me of all this You know a lot of these folks from the '60s they're out here protesting They don't want anything to do with the military [Laughter] And I kind of laugh and he says I heard you laugh [Laughter]

YATES It does seem somewhat ironic

BERGESON Yeah anyway But I had to think of that We were talking about Pat Brown

YATES And also just to tie that in since you mentioned Jerry Brown is the issue of leadership and I'm thinking again with the Peripheral Canal What do you think if anything could have been done as governor in his role to help the situation? Or was that even possible?

BERGESON Well I think you know Jerry Brown's philosophy was more it was an era of limits

YATES Right

BERGESON We can't raise our expectations Where[as] Pat Brown was that We have the world [Laughter] It's ours to create And there was just a different attitude The same thing with the transportation system in California I mean you know it went Where all the planning and I mean I watched what happened with transportation because I don't know whether you really want to get into this issue now

YATES No go ahead

BERGESON but when we moved here of course there was one freeway which was the I 5 and everybody wondered why they built Disneyland way out here you know way out in the sticks Nobody would ever come Orange County was that far off place And at that time they were designing a freeway system Well of course one of the real controversial parts of that freeway system was the coast freeway And it was Newport Beach that

defeated that Well for a long time

YATES Wait coast freeway what does that mean?

BERGESON It would replace the [Pacific] Coast Highway It would have been a coast freeway that spanned from north to south

YATES Oh I see See that's my ignorance I didn't even know about that

BERGESON Yeah All of the freeway system was all interlocked and it was planned It was planned beautifully you know as far as what But as soon as the coast freeway was eliminated in Orange County then they kind of said Well that's the hook Where are you going to '

YATES Now when was this?

BERGESON This would have been In fact it was during the time that I was running for the school board which

YATES So sixties?

BERGESON This was in the sixties shortly after Probably just about the time It was actually started in the late fifties and the early sixties and then ran through the time that they finally They had a referendum and you know Newport Beach was adamantly opposed to having a freeway Of course at this time this side of the Pacific Coast Highway was starting to develop Prior to that everything was west of the Pacific Coast Highway because it was you know Corona del Mar the peninsula Balboa Island Lido Island So that was Newport Beach and there was very little up here above the bluffs And there was Costa Mesa but then Newport was not

developed to an extent We were one of the first homes in this area
which I mean

YATES Yeah where you live now wasn't [It was a] later development

BERGESON When we would have Santa Ana winds I mean we would have six inches
of sand you know from the back bay that would sweep through

YATES So that was defeated at the local level?

BERGESON That was defeated through the efforts of Newport to keep them You
know all kinds of lobbying I mean everything went into seeing that that
was going to be defeated and it was Well there was kind of a resistance
then at the state level and that's when Adrianna Gianturco was
transportation and

YATES Head of Caltrans [California Department of Transportation]?

BERGESON Yeah Caltrans And it's funny because what she was professing were
diamond lanes and everybody's pooh poohing you know? And now of
course we have the HOV [high occupancy vehicle] lanes which are the
same things

YATES Well that's become a hot topic again in Orange County

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Toll roads versus

BERGESON Toll roads and the expressway the 91 linking Orange County and
Riverside But the issue then became I mean with the growth in
Orange County that followed that and with the inadequacy of freeways

then transportation became the hot issue. In fact, when I was running for—was it lieutenant governor, which was in '90, I believe. I'm trying to remember that.

YATES: It's 1990.

BERGESON: Yeah, that that was the critical time for transportation.

YATES: Well, let me backtrack here for a second and explain to me again. OK, so there was a proposed coast freeway? This is more like late fifties and that that was part of a state master plan. Is that correct?

BERGESON: Right. Yeah.

YATES: OK. And then what I don't really understand is the local versus the state control or ability to feed or have something go through. That's confusing to me.

BERGESON: Well, at that time, it's just the influence that Newport Beach had through legislators, through whatever means could be had. Every effort was made to defeat the coast freeway.

YATES: OK.

BERGESON: And, of course, then the discussions came along. What do you do with the Costa Mesa Freeway? You know, how does that feed into? Which is still a problem, you know? Because it goes right down to the Coast Highway, you still. In fact, in Newport there was actually a good deal of discussion when they widened the bridge, which is just down at the bottom of Dover [Drive]. You know, the bridge that you go over which

separates the upper and lower bays And you know that was a heavy heavy issue because they felt that it would bring more traffic Well it was the greatest thing that ever happened as far as facilitating When I used to have an office in Newport Center it would take me a half and hour to get home in the afternoon I get home in five minutes now you know by bringing the traffic up to Dover so you siphon all that off But I mean it made a big difference and so there have been improvements along the Coast Highway I think that have helped to alleviate But having the 405 was a big improvement too

YATES But with the defeat of having a coast [free]way go through—let me understand what you're saying—then at the state level there wasn't much interest to develop anything beyond

BERGESON It was almost a vendetta against Orange County

YATES OK

BERGESON It was very hard for us to get funds for any additional freeway development and it was just sort of Well if you've knocked out part of the missing link there How do we connect or how do we you know get the whole process of highway construction integrated in a way where traffic flows where we want it to go? And so that required a massive effort then on our part to try to relieve that situation and bring some money from the [California] Transportation Commission into Orange County and we

YATES Now you brought up 1990 I interrupted you You were saying that was a critical point?

BERGESON Well it started before that In fact one of the bills that I carried was a bill that provided for consolidation of the Orange County Transportation Authority which then was able to get a ballot measure passed ¹ which gave an additional 1/2 cent sales tax to transportation construction needs

YATES I saw that

BERGESON which then put Orange County in a position of being able to leverage state dollars to come in and to help build the freeways And that was really what changed the transportation issue Now there's still the battle about if you build the roads they will come and

YATES Right

BERGESON I mean if you're going to build you're going to continually build which I guess is probably true because transportation is becoming a problem again where it was solved for a while by toll roads and by increasing the freeway capacity

YATES Because that corridor now in fact Because I know there's a lot of business now that's moved to Orange County the I don't know I don't have my terminology but as more business builds you have more people coming in and so now that corridor the 57 the [Pomona] 60 And then getting down here of course has become much impacted

1 Measure M (November 1990)

BERGESON Yeah well I think part of this—and it's involved with the issues of housing because housing During the eighties—the same problem we're having right now—the economy was strong and housing became an issue of affordability and young people who wanted to work in Orange County because of lots of good jobs had to live in Riverside or San Bernardino or in some cases San Diego and so that put a tremendous impact on freeways And your congestion points in the morning and the afternoon when people would go to and from home were incredibly difficult to deal with And people were complaining constantly but a lot of that was because of commuter traffic And we're building up to that now I mean we're continuing to expand with those problems because affordability has been literally eliminated as far as housing in Orange County and particularly in the coastal regions I mean it's simply impossible to find housing that young couples can come in you know when you're starting out particularly And so that's what promulgated what we considered to be the housing incentives where we had the low income housing and where you had to build with a certain portion of your housing had to be low income But that has never worked because how do you monitor and make sure the people are staying there that have low incomes? And what about the cost of maintenance? So much of the new developments are gated communities and the maintenance problems are such that even though you could have a home you could afford it's the

maintenance costs that are difficult for people to maintain who are considered low income families

YATES Well you've talked about freeways what about other forms of transportation?

BERGESON Well we

YATES Or did that come up?

BERGESON Yeah I think transit has always been a concern as to whether or not it was cost effective It continues to be a hot issue in Orange County Light rail has been probably one of the least desired forms simply because everybody has an automobile and they don't want to give it up And the problem also of networking When you find you have an opportunity for light rail unless you have places for people to access the light rail and get where they need to go when they arrive at a place In other words you have to have the complete transportation network or hook up to be able to make it effective But I think that we tried to do this and a lot of the plans that we were developing through the county which I worked closely on—the Transportation Committee and with the Transportation Commission working closely with the commissioners to see that Orange County's needs could be met We tried to look at right away for potential transit uses in the future and that was I think a very viable alternative but of course now I think the freeways have been expanded to just about the point you know six lanes on either side Down at the El Toro Y there are twenty

two lanes of traffic that pass at that point. So I think much of the freeway capacity has been utilized. And with each administration trying to provide where they think priorities are, they've tried desperately to feed into the transportation issues, but there are some that are strongly supportive of rapid transit or light rail or some form of alternative efforts that they think might be very efficient. But then they look at other areas like Los Angeles where they've had the boondoggle with the metro and problems like that which tend to say, 'No. We don't want to get ourselves involved in anything like that; it's too expensive. You don't know what you're going to have as an outcome.' Again, all the problems of possibly having to go underground, the difficulties you know of going into fully developed areas and how you're going to be able to do that.

YATES: So those were the primary things that came up in terms of on the Transportation Committee? I mean, obviously, you're hearing about other parts of the state.

BERGESON: Yeah, right.

YATES: but I was particularly interested in Orange County and, of course, you represented these other areas. What characterized transportation issues for those particular areas?

BERGESON: Well, we got into real discussions, too, when the environmental issues came up because some of the folks from Riverside wanted to build other alternatives other than the 91. Well, that meant that they had to come

through some very sensitive areas in Orange County either through the Cleveland National Forest or other areas that were considered to be open space you know that They simply didn't want any type of development and so those In fact one of my frustrations was that the boards of supervisors of the counties that I represented barely knew each other There was very little discussion and I always felt there needed to be much more collaboration because we should be looking at things much more regionally particularly the housing jobs balance and some of these issues that required a collaborative effort if you were ever going to be able to resolve the problems in any single specific area

YATES Well this ties in a little bit Another topic I wanted to ask you about was working with constituents because you did mention earlier on that some of your legislation that you carried actually came from the constituent level And I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about what you did to maintain contact with constituents since you're up in Sacramento part of the time a great distance from your actual district So maybe you could talk a little bit about that?

BERGESON Well I think your constituent support of course is very very important In fact we did a lot of case work Some offices wouldn't even do case work I mean it's I actually heard the comment 'Unless it nets a campaign contribution don't do it' and that offended me greatly because I think people elect you because they want a representative that's going to

represent their interests. And there are a lot of grievances that are valid and I think a lot of them just because. Folks that do everything right and for all the right reasons can't get through the bureaucracy and my office used to do a lot to assist them. And of course I had two Leisure Worlds I represented a lot of senior citizens who had problems that could have been easily fixed if somebody had just sat down and told them what phone number to call. Or if they couldn't get the phones to be answered that we could at least make a call and see that their needs were met. So we worked a lot with that and I had one staff member that worked just with senior problems and had been in county services and understood you know what a lot of the problems were and it really helped a lot. And of course we held regular forums particularly with a lot of the social service networks and listened to some of the concerns that they had and I think it you know was something that I felt was very necessary. And again because we had the kind of staff I think that was very sensitive. And no one was ever turned away unless it was something that was just so ridiculous that they refused to be reasonable but I mean where people had genuine concerns we were very responsive. We had a regular ongoing meeting with the mayors of the districts and supervisors. I would go into the various counties and we would have kind of a forum type approach or town hall if you will. And I never spent a weekend doing anything except being out in the field. I was always in the district

on the weekends I never stayed in Sacramento during the weekend that was for the district I always felt like every day was a Monday I didn't have any Fridays and you know we worked hard at it But it did give an opportunity during the summer you know during the months when the legislature was not in session and that was entirely constituent work I remember being in Imperial County on days where it was 119 and 120 [degrees] but I mean we made the effort to be down there because this was a county that needed a lot of attention

YATES I was going to say how did you focus Focus is the wrong word Once you're in the senate you have a much broader district I mean geographically it's huge and how did you decide or determine where you were going to put your energies so you were in touch with your constituents?

BERGESON Well it was generally by where the needs were And I didn't spend nearly as much time in Newport Beach as I did in Calexico I mean I slept in Newport usually but then I slept down there [Imperial County] a lot because usually I would spend two days We were fortunate that we had a lot of the growers that would provide transportation because to drive would take most of the time on the road rather than spending time there And so they would be willing to fly you down you know? We'd always have to report it and go through the necessary requirements but it was helpful because then I could spend a couple of days and we could really

focus on the problems that we needed to address

And I think because the district had diversity it made it more exciting to represent because the issues were so completely different I mean education permeated throughout and of course education was always sort of a bottom line that I had but I mean because the demands were such whether it was water or transportation or agriculture or environmental issues Because of representing all of the coastal Orange County we had a lot of the environmental issues that we were dealing with and so it really meant that

I had three offices at one time We had one in Imperial and we had a full time staff member who knew the district well who had worked You know her family was a long time family and could really pull issues forward in a way that I could better understand and also know the people you needed to talk to in order to get appropriate outreach get the information out And we also had an office in Rancho California That was prior to incorporation We worked with them in their incorporation efforts because at that time I was chair of Local Government so we provided staff expertise in how you go about all the technical difficulties of incorporation you know assisting them in what they needed to know

And so every area that we represented had unique problems and they were not necessarily in competition In trying to work with San Diego and Imperial County on water issues it wasn't so much in

competition it was getting an understanding where there were reasonable accommodations that could be made that would meet both their needs And as I say I don't think we were as successful as we hoped but at least I think it started a lot of the dialogue that eventually would if ever lead to a successful conclusion

YATES This is with water in particular?

BERGESON Yeah One of the reasons that I opposed [Proposition] 140¹ which is the term limits was because it required that I close two of my offices You had to reduce staff by 40 percent

YATES Right I'd forgotten about the impact it had on the staff

BERGESON The loss to me you know was irreparable because you closed off access then to these offices I mean there's no way

YATES So on a practical level the way you find out about the issues is through these local offices?

BERGESON Yeah we worked with them Because we had people who were staffing them Volunteers worked in the office and would come in you know take the calls And we had a lot of people feel intimidated in calling Sacramento for everything And so by having local offices where people knew the number and they knew the people that were working there and they'd come in and help if they wanted to volunteer some time We even

1 Proposition 140 (November 1990) limits on terms of office legislators retirement legislative operating costs

had students who would get credit interns that would work sometimes during the summer sometimes during the school year for credit And we always made it an interesting experience for them We gave them actual things to do and I know when I had my fellowship

[End Tape 7 Side A]

[Begin Tape 7 Side B]

YATES This is the Sac State fellowship program? [California State University Sacramento California Senate Associates]

BERGESON Yeah and they're very competitive You get top students and we gave them full responsibility I'd give each one of them their own bill and they would go through—of course we had somebody monitoring it—but I mean they would go through the process I would actually let them at some point present the bill in committee and I hired a few of them because we found that they were extremely talented and they came out to be some of my best staff members But I think the more responsibility you give people—you know you assume certain talents are there and I think that's pretty easy to determine in the process of interviewing—and they produce results A lot of it is because they have the initiative and you give them the opportunity to utilize that initiative

YATES I was wondering if you could give an example of a piece of legislation you ended up carrying that originated with a constituent or you know more than one person?

BERGESON One of the bills that I carried It wasn't my bill that was eventually signed but it was a bill that I introduced that I took a lot of flak on for bicycle helmets A group of students from one of the elementary schools and the chief of police from Irvine and some of the parents from the PTA came and talked to me about the fact that they had a number of accidents with children who had been injured and brain damaged because running into curbs or something where kids were thrown over the handle bars And they wanted to propose that I put in a bill to require bicycle helmets for kids Well it made a lot a sense to me having kids and I thought 'Well this is something that would be interesting to do Well of course we hit every snag you possibly could imagine just simply because people didn't want it They thought it was another regulation you know? And I remember someone says Well pretty soon you're going to have to wear helmets in case they fall out of bed at night I mean these kinds of arguments that go on and they just really made fun of my bill So it was killed that year but it came back later and finally they did enact it But the arguments came up Well how can you enforce it? Are you going to give these kids tickets? Is it going to be the city who's going to do it? Is it the school district? How are you going to do it? You know all the problems When you get into the actual drafting of the bill there's always It's not as easy as you think it's always pretty difficult

Another one came to me that was a real sensitive one but one that I

had difficulty with because of the practical applications. There was a little boy that was killed on his first day going to the Marian Bergeson [Elementary] School in Laguna Niguel and the parents of course were devastated. What had happened is that the bus had dropped the little boy off. He became confused and thought his home was across the street and ran across the street in front of a pick up truck and the parents were waiting for him at another corner. And it was his first day at school and you know it was a big day for him he was in the second grade. And I mean it was just a terrible thing and I really grieved for the family. Well they wanted then to have every bus stop with red lights flashing so that the traffic would have to stop every time a bus stopped.

YATES This wasn't to drop off students?

BERGESON Yeah dropping off or picking them up either way.

YATES OK.

BERGESON But every time a bus stopped for unloading or loading students the red lights would flash and every car on both sides of the street would have to stop. Where you have divided highways where you have oftentimes shrubbery that goes down the middle of it.

YATES Because the law is now that the cars do have to stop on the side where the bus is.

BERGESON Yeah they have to. Right right. Well this would require both sides of the street. Well actually what they have to do now is a result of the law.

because they didn't used to have to stop only unless the kids Well what would happen is that it was always assumed that the bus drivers didn't stop where the kids had to cross the street If they did the bus driver would get out of the bus escort children across the street—the red lights would be blinking

YATES OK

BERGESON So I mean it's different and that's required But this would have required that at every stop And I mean it just wasn't practical because there's no way that you would be able to get I mean it was difficult The bill was actually toned down to the point where it didn't have a lot of teeth in it and it's not as safe as I had hoped it would have been But again it's where you look at the implications of something and it sounds simple Well of course parents want their kids safe and they don't want to know that every time a bus stops that there's a possibility that someone's going to come behind the bus and you know And they should know that if those red lights are flashing Again it was a local concern that was brought to me by the parents in a very emotional setting

Another one was where the parents' daughter had been killed murdered on a community college campus We were able then to get as new campuses are developed provisions for outside lighting This was in an unlit parking lot This was Saddleback [Community] College And so we were able to put in requirements for new campuses that outside

lighting be provided in their budgets. But again, we would come before the committee and the Department of Finance would put a \$300 billion cost for the bill—I mean that's an exaggeration but the cost they figured to re-light all the parking lots in every community college or college in California. So there's a reality pitch that you have to recognize. Even though things make sense. And then you get to the point too, do you want to over-regulate to the extent that you're causing more problems with the bureaucracy than you are in solving a problem because a lot of our laws are really promulgated because somebody abuses the system some place. And so we are legislated to the worst of us. You know, assume that everybody's going to make a dumb mistake, and that of course gets costly and over-bureaucratic and over-regulatory.

YATES: I can imagine it would be difficult negotiating or working with the parents in this case and trying to try to do what you think is the right thing to do.

BERGESON: To do it in a way that can work because parents are terribly. Well, you can understand?

YATES: Oh, sure.

BERGESON: I mean, it's terribly.

YATES: It's emotional.

BERGESON: It's all so very emotional when you're working with a very sensitive personal situation.

YATES Well let me ask you now about elections So your seat was up for election in 1988 and now I know that same year that Congressman Robert [E] Badham decided not to seek re election and I also know that you considered whether to run for Congress but decided not to and tell me why you decided not to run

BERGESON Well it was a really tough decision because I had a great deal of encouragement I was told This is your seat You should take advantage of it They wanted to see more women in Congress and I actually took a trip to Washington [D C] and I loved the Capitol I loved the excitement of Washington but I started thinking about the long trip the difficulty of commuting I also looked at my age I was sixty years old at that time or in my sixties I believe I don't remember exactly the age But it seemed to me that longevity and seniority were really important and how long it would take for me to be really effective You know to be able to do the things that I thought would make it exciting to be a participant And at the same time I was a state senator I was chairing a committee I was I felt having a rather substantial impact on policy development and had worked closely and had what I thought was a very productive and successful career in Sacramento not knowing how many more years I'd really want to stay active That was before term limits You know it might be better for me to stay where I was And I did a lot of soul searching I talked to congressman who had been in the legislature as well

YATES Who did you talk to?

BERGESON I talked to Claire Burgener who had been He had told me the best job he ever had was in the California State Senate. I talked to Dan Lungren and he did indicate that it was hard on the family and that the commute was difficult and that's what I was really concerned about because my husband said, "No, I'm not moving to Washington. We have the best place in the world to live and I'm not moving to Washington." He said, "If you want to do it on a commute basis as far as But I mean every weekend because knowing me I'd want to be back here every weekend to do the things that I thought were important for the district as well as I had done in Sacramento. So it just seemed to be after I went through my decision analysis and weighed both sides that my future would be better served staying in California and serving in the state senate."

YATES Out of curiosity, why did Claire Burgener say that his best time was in the state senate?

BERGESON He said that it was the best job he ever had but he enjoyed Congress. I mean, it wasn't that he didn't enjoy

YATES Oh, sure.

BERGESON He loved his experiences there. But he's someone that I knew that had kind of tasted all of it and which he found to be the dessert. And I think a lot of it was that you're close here, you're working more with California people and the people that you know and you've grown with politically.

But no he said it would be a tough decision. He was telling me about the wonderful things you can do in Washington and how close you are to so many of the cultural experiences. His wife was happy back there too and I mean it would have been a lot different. Of course you don't enjoy going to a lot of cultural experiences unless you have someone to share them with. And I think that was another thing I thought. Well I don't see that part being that attractive to me. It still would be what I can do to get home you know? And those long commutes to me were just. You know taking the red eye and having to get up first thing in the morning to be off to some kind of a fund raising or some type of event which most of them do when they're home.

YATES You ran again obviously in '88 and won re-election but within that short time '89 there was the possibility of the treasurer's position—how real that was or not is [Laughter] I guess debatable—and then you ran for lieutenant governor in '90. And I was wondering at that point still around '88 what your aspirations were for higher office in California? What role that played in your decision?

BERGESON You know I don't really think I ever thought about higher office because I enjoyed what I was doing and I've always been one that. You don't necessarily plan for your next step but if you do a good job where you are that opportunities come along. I never expected to be in the assembly. I never expected to be in the senate. In other words I didn't from the time I

was a little girl [say] I'm going to be in the senate some day

YATES Sure

BERGESON Never had that as an idea but I've always felt that if you enjoy what you're doing you do a good job opportunities come along and the future takes care of itself in that regard and it just seemed that When the treasurer's job [became available] my staff thought Oh this would be great You know staff are always plotting and scheming anyway as it helps them too And so they thought it would be great and I never thought there would be much of a chance It wasn't anything that was a real serious I think they wanted to have a woman on the short list and so that was

YATES Right you mentioned that before Sure

BERGESON And I think it probably looked good but I never took that as a real serious opportunity When the lieutenant governor's job came up I was encouraged again because they thought it would be great to have a woman running mate

YATES And when you say they who are you referring to?

BERGESON It's just as you're talking around they say Oh why don't you do it? You know just women that you'd be talking to and even in the legislature I was encouraged by some And when I decided I thought Well I ought to probably do it early enough where I get at least to see what kind of support I would get " You know shake it out And so I did and of

course one of my very best friends decided to run also and that was John Seymour

YATES Right I wanted to ask you about when did you decide to run and why and

BERGESON Well we both sort of were thinking about it at the same time both being from Orange County And I thought that it would be a tough race because you're running against Leo McCarthy and

YATES He was an incumbent?

BERGESON Leo and I had always got along really well And it's more difficult to go into a hot campaign against somebody that you've always had a real good working relationship and I had [one] as I say with Leo And John and I had been very close friends throughout the years You know he'd endorse me for most of my races early on He was in the senate before I was and it was kind of a tough decision but I decided to go for it I mean I'm competitive as I said I don't think anyone gets into politics that isn't competitive

YATES What do you think finally was the turning point for you? When and what was it?

BERGESON I think when some folks put up the idea that a good campaign probably couldn't be done by a woman It was kind of an innocuous not really stated "Well Bergeson you're a woman Don't bother to do it but

YATES And where was this coming from?

BERGESON Well I sort of got it out of some of the macho folks in the state legislature And of course John started staking out the turf and I thought No [Laughter] No I don't think it's going to go that way John And we kind of battled each other and it was interesting because his campaign chairman was someone that I had worked with on my former campaigns as well We'd always gotten along really well and there never have been the competitive sort of problems that you get when you get into an election And John was doing a lot of fund raising He and I had picked up a lot of the issues We were both very strong in transportation issues and local government He came off of the Anaheim City Council if I'm not mistaken He had been very active and

YATES At the local level?

BERGESON was president of the [California Association of Realtors] So he established himself a lot through his efforts through the real estate interests

YATES That's right I think he worked pretty diligently through his twenties and made a name for himself locally

BERGESON Yeah And that's where he had A lot of his support came from the real estate development industry And of course that had been a lot of my Well in Orange County you didn't get contributions except from people that have been involved in the development industry because that's where most of your campaign funds emanated from But we both had a

lot of the same support and so it was really causing a great deal of anguish from people that had supported both of us. But I went forward with it.

YATES: When timing wise, did you really make the decision to go ahead with this?

BERGESON: You know, I don't recall exactly. It was fairly early though, knowing that it would probably be a tough campaign where you'd have to raise a good deal of money. And it was kind of a money race to see who would get the money ahead of time.

I brought Ron Smith in as my campaign chairman, and I had met him primarily through Tom Campbell, and Tom Campbell was very helpful in my election. I mean, when I ran for lieutenant governor, he helped a lot with the San Francisco base.

And the thing that I think was interesting and probably the defining issue with John Seymour and myself was, we both had almost the same voting record. And he had voted pro-life all the way through. I had always voted pro-life, and we had, I would say, identical voting records. Well, then, he decided that he was going to change his position. He was going to become pro-choice, and so I thought, Hmmm. [Laughter] It isn't the question of pro-life or pro-choice, it's the question of integrity, and so that's where the campaigns really focused. Every chance we could, we'd go into these debates and he would always say, "We are alike in every position except on the choice issue." And then I would say, "We

are alike in every issue according to our voting records because our voting records are exactly the same And the campaign became I wouldn't say it was ugly but it became very acrimonious before we were finally finished And of course when I won the primary it was very difficult You know I think that those feelings probably still exist

YATES That caused a friction that hasn't gone away?

BERGESON Yeah And of course then you know I was Governor Pete Wilson's running mate and I think actually that there had Particularly with Gayle [Edlund Wilson] she had been much more supportive of John And now Gayle and I have a wonderful relationship we're very close But I think at that time So I had to I think build up a level of trust with the Wilsons assuring that I would be a person that they could trust and work with and I think that existed During the campaign there were the Wilson people and there were my people you know? And eventually the governor hired a lot of my people They did such a good job And so they actually stole them away from me

YATES Oh you mean during the campaign?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES Oh

BERGESON One of them was Kevin [H] Sloat who did the management While Ron Smith was the consultant Kevin did the day to day managing He worked closely with Bob White and a lot of their people and of course they

recognized his talent. So after the campaign—of course I lost to Leo McCarthy—then the governor hired Kevin. He eventually became the legislative secretary. But it was helpful having him where he was because of course I had good communications with the governor's office. But you know then the governor and I were very close thereafter and had an extremely strong working relationship and of course he appointed me as superintendent of public instruction not too long after that. But it was a campaign where I learned a lot. I mean I think I always knew it was an uphill battle because you're running against an incumbent, you know.

YATES Which is always difficult.

BERGESON and someone who is very well respected. And I did better than any other candidate running against an incumbent. Dan Lungren was the only one that was successful in that particular year, but he was running against a non-incumbent, so it was much easier in a sense.

YATES Well, tell me, first back to the primary, why do you think you were able to win the primary and get the Republican nomination?

BERGESON You know, I remember I was driving into Los Angeles. We were going in to hear the returns and I heard on the radio. The exit polls have just declared Marian Bergeson the winner. And of course you can imagine I just couldn't believe it. I thought there was a mistake someplace.

YATES Right.

BERGESON You know, I was prepared. You're never really prepared to lose, per se.

but I mean I always figured that it was going to be tough I think John had more money than I did although I think I raised about \$3 million dollars I'm not sure

YATES I think I read an article—I was just looking at my notes again—and it said something like he was going to raise \$15 million for this campaign

BERGESON Well he spent a lot more than me He out spent me considerably

YATES And at that point you had about \$1 million it said

BERGESON Yeah yeah I think in the total campaign it was around \$3 million Don't quote me per se [Laughter]

YATES Oh no no Of course not

BERGESON because I'm not really sure what the exact amount was

YATES I was amazed at the amount

BERGESON Well he had a lot of the money from the realtors and of course it was kind of a touchy time for me because a lot of these realtors have been my very closest friends that I had known throughout prior campaigns because they had become very involved in my support groups So it was tough and it was tough for them because they had to make choices that were difficult but there was no way that they would not come down on the person that had always been closest to them

YATES So in your mind is there anything that you think made the difference that you can identify in terms of winning the primary?

BERGESON Well I do think it focused really on the integrity issue Congressman

Tom Campbell helped me a lot in the Bay Area because those are people that traditionally would have been turned off that would be considered so strongly pro choice that they would probably not support. And some said, 'I can never support a pro life candidate.' And we measured the differences. We did polling about 5 percent on either side. Five percent would say, 'I would never support a pro choice [candidate].' 5 percent said, 'I would never support a pro life candidate.' So it's kind of a wash when it comes to the issue. We tried to avoid it as much as possible. The press would never allow it to be avoided. It would come up at every single debate whereas you know I was much more interested in talking about transportation issues which were the hot issues of those days at that time.

YATES I was looking at some of the articles especially once you won the nomination—of course Pete Wilson was running for governor and he was pro choice—and it would say things like the Bergeson factor.

BERGESON Yeah.

YATES You know they were talking about. Because Dianne Feinstein was running and the whole issue about one woman candidate and then there's the issue of well if it's a woman candidate are they usually pro choice? But you were a woman candidate and not pro choice and he was pro choice and whether you wanted to avoid the subject or not abortion was a big topic.

BERGESON Yeah it came up at every single forum

YATES So I was curious as to your take in terms of who you think you were attracting as voters? Did people assume that you were a female you were pro choice? Do you think that played into it?

BERGESON You know the pro choice people felt that they didn't know my position. The interesting thing after the primary I had more votes than John even in his own area which is very familiar with our positions because it was in the press everyday. But I mean they knew exactly what the situation was and so they still voted regardless. I mean there were certain areas of course. I knew I was never going to pick up San Francisco even though I think I got the endorsement of the San Francisco Examiner. But Leo McCarthy that's his hometown you know?

YATES I was going to say that's his area

BERGESON And so I mean we knew it was going to be very difficult. We were targeting the Central Valley who have more conservative Democrats. Many of them are pro life in that area because of the strong Catholic factor and then of course with Orange County—figuring this was a general election. And as I say we did well considering the difficulty of running against a popular incumbent. And that was significant and it was a great experience because I really got to know California. I mean I could see the diversity the populations. One of the most interesting experiences I had—in fact I was with Treasurer Matt Fong—was a Chinese

celebration in San Francisco. And the woman that owns the newspaper—I've forgotten which one it is—is a good friend of Senator Quentin Kopp's and I got to know them. Quentin and I have always had a good relationship, too, and so I had a meeting with her and she agreed she'd support me. And so they had this fund-raiser, which was in Chinese tradition, which was really kind of funny because every table you'd go to they would want to toast you. Well, of course, Matt was taking me around and toasting and [Laughter] I don't drink, and so I was trying just to take a little sip because you don't want to do anything [Laughter].

YATES To offend them?

BERGESON Yeah. But it was fun. It was great. I got to know everybody there. They were wonderful. They were friendly. They're outgoing, you know? And she was such a character in a way that was very lovable. And I remember they had a . . . Well, I don't know what you call it. It isn't karate, but they had this two by four and then they had a way that you . . . You know, to break it? And they had Pete Wilson do it. Actually, he did pretty well. Everybody was pretty surprised. I was glad they didn't ask me to do it. But it was kind of a joint fund-raiser and a support party, I think, for the Republicans, which was pretty unusual for San Francisco. But we had great experiences. You know, we'd go to these little hotels [that were] barely lit. And I remember one day, I got through the end of the day and I looked in the mirror and I had one earring that was completely

They were different earrings And the shoes didn't match I had one brown and one blue shoe on As you're getting dressed in the dark practically there's like a little light you know So I mean it was a lot of fun exhausting You never stop I just thought I'll never live through this I think now having to go through a schedule where you're up every morning between 4:30 and 5:30 and you're up every night and you're flying to see this group But it was exhilarating I think your adrenaline flows for the occasion it was really quite an exciting experience And I think you know I'm glad I did it It was really one of the things I look back at with a lot of interest I wouldn't want to do it again but it was something I thoroughly enjoyed

YATES I'm sorry to come back to it one more time but in terms of your working relationship during the campaign with Pete Wilson and this issue of abortion how much of a role did that play in impacting your working with him and also in terms of viability as a candidate do you think for both of you?

BERGESON You know it really depended on the group I remember we went to Fresno and they had a lot of the pro-life I mean these are the really dedicated pro-lifers and they had the pictures and placards out and they were protesting Wilson's support on abortion You know I felt the difficulty that was there and I know it was hard on Gayle And I don't know whether it helped or hurt whether it focused more That

particularly is the only time I can really look back and say that I felt that it was an issue that was so deeply divisive that personal feelings could be hurt one way or the other. You know, that's the only time that I can recall

YATES: Of course, it wasn't the only issue but, again, I'm focusing on what I read in the paper.

BERGESON: Well, it became pretty much the issue because of the protesters and the demonstrations that they had there. And I preferred not to. I mean, the issue to me was one that I frankly didn't enjoy being brought up. It wasn't the sort of thing that I ever felt should have been so wildly involved in a campaign. But then, you know, you get into the issue of the. In the event that something happens to the governor, the lieutenant governor then has to sign bills. Leo McCarthy tried to make it an issue, too, but Leo was the same as John. He was a very strong Catholic.

YATES: That's right.

BERGESON: and he had come through a period of time where he had been very strongly pro-life. And the thing is, when you're in the legislature, I mean, you can be a private citizen and it's not an issue. Nobody even cares. I mean, they don't ask. And then all of a sudden, it becomes an issue, and I never thought it was an issue. I'd been brought up with. That was something that was just kind of a belief I had, but you never put it in frames of this is black and white and good or bad and all the things that tend to identify and really categorize you. I mean, it became a litmus

test Guns and abortion!

YATES Oh you mean that are always the hot topics?

BERGESON Yeah Because see I supported assault weapons ban and I was the only Republican that did that which sort of crossed me over with some of these groups That's why it's hard to say well

YATES Is this during the same period you're saying?

BERGESON Yeah Because that's when the big issue came up when I voted for David Roberti's assault weapon bill Mike Roos and David Roberti carried the bill and I saw no reason in the world why people needed assault weapons And to me the bill made sense In fact we held a hearing in Stockton No it was Oakland I guess and they were talking about these gangs that would walk into the gun shops and they'd say "I want one of these and one of these and one of these and they had drug money so they had plenty of money and there was no problem picking up their guns They'd be on the street shooting up the town the next night You know that's terrible This was the weapon of choice with kids And these were part of the gang problems So anyway

YATES So you didn't see your stance in particular—again I'm sort of juxtaposing what was in the paper—as being a real problem in terms of one running on a Republican platform even though the lieutenant governor has been a Democrat and there's been a Republican in office as governor That's what I was curious about

BERGESON The question came up supposing In fact at one time I went to a women s conference and they had the dream team that was Bergeson Feinstein

YATES Where being a woman was a positive?

BERGESON Yeah Right So I mean I never feel In fact when that question came up I said no because I have always prided myself on getting along with people and if it were a governor I would not be a Mike Curb you know running off to appoint judges or doing that sort of thing But the governor is the governor Respect the right that they have as a governor which didn t change my civil rights but it certainly is respecting The policy development of the state would fall with what the governor would desire And so that is when that issue came up

I also have always felt though that the governor and lieutenant governor should be of the same party I mean there s some things that I ve always believed in I think now certainly the state insurance commissioner should be appointed and the state superintendent of public instruction should be appointed and the governor and the lieutenant governor should run as a partisan team Those are the things that I ve always said even before I ran for lieutenant governor But the system as it is now I would be a good lieutenant governor regardless of which party

YATES Your stance was

BERGESON but of course I was a Republican running on a Republican ticket and

my goal was to get Pete Wilson elected. And of course he had a very tight race. At one point in time we were up in the polling and it was about two weeks before the election and Wilson was like twenty points ahead. And then there was an issue—it's called the fairness issue and I've even forgotten what it has to do with some labor issues. And in that period of time. That's why timing is everything when it comes to an election. It's like a basketball game. You know the last three seconds. Wilson dropped and of course I dropped down but I mean they pretty well paralleled and it became some kind of a partisan effort. And I wish I could remember. In fact I was trying to remember the other day what that issue was that suddenly. But it was called the fairness issue.

YATES So this is the critical point?

BERGESON Yeah. It changed the whole setting and almost got Dianne Feinstein elected governor.

YATES Right. I'm looking at the general election summary of votes and she ended up with 45.79 percent and Wilson with 49.25 percent and then McCarthy had 51.28 percent and you had 42.18 percent.

BERGESON Yeah. I dropped way down in the final analysis but at one point there was a

YATES It was close.

BERGESON It was close, yeah.

YATES Well, let me ask you now in terms of your term in the senate. Also, I

imagine this is taking away a lot of time from your activities as state senator But also in 1990 of course the term limits proposition passed—140 And you were term limited—is that correct?—for 94 And then I know you ran

BERGESON No '96 actually

YATES Oh that's right '96

BERGESON Yeah

YATES So you ran for election again in '92 And now tell me at what point did you decide about what you were going to do next and what you were going to do next in terms of knowing your term ended in '96

BERGESON Well of course as I said it cut deeply into my ability to be a good legislator simply because of what happened as far as district staff and the cut backs there

YATES So that was immediate then? That went into effect

BERGESON That was immediate yeah And not wishing really to consider myself retired at that point you know what could I do? I didn't want to run for anything statewide because I really wanted to go back to Orange County I mean I wanted to come back home And knowing that [General] Thomas [F] Riley And Tom had always sort of coached me saying You really ought to consider being on the [Orange County] Board of Supervisors You've got all the background experience you've been chair of Local Government You've had the advantage of having a perspective

that would be so helpful in the county We d had a very very close working relationship because I had always worked with him and his staff in the district because we represented a lot of the same district constituency

And when I was talking to a group of folks and they were working on my 92 election and they wanted to know Well what do you think you're going to be doing? And I just kind of off the cuff said ' Oh who knows? Maybe I'll come back and run for the Board of Supervisors And all of a sudden their eyes perked up and they said "Well gee maybe you ought to consider getting up in front pretty soon and indicating that you're interested in that because Tom Riley of course was getting into his eighties and his health was failing and it was felt then that he would probably need a replacement within the next election period which was in 94

And I sort of toyed with the thought but I really didn't make a decision I just thought it would be something that might be attractive that would keep me busy in a way that I could feel energized because there were a lot of things going on in the county that I thought were important And of course I had my feelings of what county government should be which has never fully materialized But I had a lot of concerns over county government and its' effectiveness You know what it really should be doing So I don't know when I exactly Probably after a year or so

I didn't want to make a decision when I was into a brand new term. You know, I had four years to go. But I knew that after that four years I was gone. Well, of course, it didn't quite coincide because it would have been great if the board election would have been '96, then it wouldn't have been a problem. But because it was in '94, then it became. Because I felt that I still

YATES: You were part way through your term?

BERGESON: Yeah, I still had a couple years on my term. But I think all in all, I decided. Well, if I don't run for the board now, I never can because once somebody else has been elected, you know, they're pretty well assured they're going to be there for a long time. So I did. I made the announcement. I had pretty much unanimous support. In fact, it became kind of a joke because they felt that how many elections were necessary because then, I mean, a special election in the senate. The assembly person would run so that would mean a special election in the assembly and then the people that were running for city council for these. I mean, it was just this revolving situation. In fact, one of the reporters, John Jacobs of The Sacramento Bee, called me—what did he call me?—Typhoid Marian or something. I don't know. It was awful.

YATES: Well, in fact, as an aside, Leroy Greene just had his [California] State Government [Oral History Program] interview [done] and he talks about this impact that people didn't really foresee of 140 that of people of

course seeking other offices

BERGESON Yeah

YATES And you know some people now who are going in as soon as they get in they're seeking another office But also the ramifications financially and otherwise

BERGESON Yeah and it costs [for] special

YATES that it's going all through the local levels

BERGESON special elections No that's very true because each of these required a special election

YATES Which is logical but I hadn't really thought about the ramifications all the way down

BERGESON Well you get into the food chain you know? I mean you have city council people moving up and then of course the state legislature and then you get into congressional

YATES And what does that really do in terms of One is the cost issue but it's also knowledge and other things but anyway So you made the decision

BERGESON So I made the decision then to run for the Board of Supervisors and I didn't have any opposition so I was pretty well elected in the June primary and I continued on I made my retirement or resignation from the legislature at the end of that year January so that I could have continuity with my terms

YATES Right

BERGESON And then I took office January 6 1995 and that was one month after Orange County had declared bankruptcy

YATES Right and let me ask you before we launch into your actually being on the board Of course I was reading up on the bankruptcy issue and I know that Robert [L] Citron the treasurer was also up for re election when you ran And that of course his opponent who was a Republican I believe Whether that matters It s a bi partisan office right?

BERGESON Yeah yeah

YATES That doesn t matter But he did bring up the issue of Or questioned some of the practices that the treasurer had [made] in terms of investments And I know I have my terminology

BERGESON Yeah No right

YATES I ve read up on it but I can t speak that eloquently about it I know that it said that you supported [John M W] Moorlach for a time and I was just wondering in retrospect one what was the response to Moorlach s bringing this up as an issue? This is pre bankruptcy

BERGESON I have depositions that are this thick [Laughter]

YATES OK I m sure this has been asked before but I wanted to get your take on

BERGESON Well what happened is that during the treasurer s campaign which was kind of a no brainer Citron had been doing great When I worked with the county I was always amazed because they never seemed to need

money. All the other counties were crying that they had lost great sums of money during the . . . You know, this was during the nineties when [there was a] huge recession and Orange County seemed to be doing OK, and I was having a great deal of difficulty understanding why they were doing so well while others were having such problems. And Citron had been elected treasurer of the year and was doing . . . In fact, Kathleen Brown ran against [Thomas] Tom Hayes because he wasn't using investment practices like Citron and making the kinds of returns on these investments. You know, because everyone could see this guy who was doing a fantastic job of investing and bringing in high levels of revenue as a result of that. So it was just a common thing, this guy's doing a great job. I don't think anybody was ever asking questions because you always assume somebody's there, somebody's taking charge and they know what's going on. However, when John Moorlach decided to run for treasurer, I thought, "Well, he's a Republican, and I was also running. I will support him and give him an endorsement, because Citron had been around a long time. You know, it's time."

YATES: I think it said he'd been in office twenty-four years.

BERGESON: Yeah, it's time for a change and so I gave him my endorsement, as did Congressman [Christopher] Chris Cox, and so he immediately put both of us on as co-chairmen of his committee. And I thought, "That's fine. I didn't have any problem with that. And then I start reading in the

newspaper Of course I'm in Sacramento during this period of time and you're picking up news from I mean I'm not on the front lines down here and I picked up the information that a lot of partisan issues are being raised and that it was Moorlach making accusations against the treasurer I didn't know that much about what was going on frankly and I had never been involved with a lot of investment practices and when they started talking about some of these issues frankly they were over my head I mean

YATES It didn't register?

BERGESON I learned a lot about repurchase agreements and about leveraging and everything after that but not until I had been forced into a situation that I was suddenly confronted with a disaster that was coming about Just from a partisan position I felt I don't want to get involved with something that's going to be difficult and if I go on the board and with a lot of bad feelings that have occurred because of what the party And I considered it was primarily an effort to try to politically discredit the treasurer In fact I asked my staff consultant who worked a lot with local government investing See I had to deal with issues of not how the money was invested but the authority by which investments are made I served on the Bonded Indebtedness Subcommittee that Lucy Killea chaired and then also I served as chair of the Local Government Committee which gets into some of these policies And I asked the consultant See what you

can find out about Citron. She came back and says, 'Well, he does some pretty high powered investments but he is well respected. He's been president of the [California Municipal] Treasurers Association. I thought, well, it's got to be a partisan thing then. And so I talked to John Moorlach, told him I felt that I wanted to withdraw my endorsement. I wasn't going to endorse Citron but I felt that under the circumstances it would be best if he just removed my name from his material since I was going to be on the Board of Supervisors and I didn't want. Well, he agreed very gentlemanly about it and I didn't really pursue it that much farther and, you know, kind of just went along and

YATES: Let the election happen?

BERGESON: I tried to finish up my term. Yeah, I tried to get things done. And then of course I suddenly realized after. Well, I think the first thing I had a call from this [person]—who was not the CEO because they didn't have a CEO, they had a chief administrative officer, which is Ernie Schneider—who called and said, 'You're probably going to be hearing about some investment problems. But he said, 'don't worry about it. It's all paper. He said, 'There's no real problem. There's no danger,' and so I thought, well, thank goodness. [Laughter]

YATES: When was this? Do you remember?

BERGESON: It was probably a couple of weeks before the actual announcement.

YATES: So late November or late December or so?

BERGESON It was in And I remember I was home that day I had the television on and I was listening I sometimes listen to the local news but I had on a major network I remember it was on a major network and here s Supervisor Tom Riley I said 'Oh there s Tom Riley on the television " and I m listening And he says Orange County s declaring bankruptcy Well I mean I was absolutely devastated I felt betrayed I thought How could this happen?

[End Tape 7 Side B]

[Begin Tape 8 Side A]

And then the next day I called my staff and I said It looks as though Orange County has a very serious problem and I m not sure what I want to do at this point And I thought about it and I thought I can t back out That would show a real act of cowardice And frankly I could be of help probably with my experience with the legislature If they need legislative action I d know pretty much the avenues to take and maybe I could really be of use during this period of time

And I remember the swearing in was very There was I think a feeling that we have to work together and we have to get this over with and of course the two board members Jim Silva and myself had just come on And then it wasn t long after that I mean it turned really ugly really ugly And there were threats and recall petitions and I d look upon the audience and I d think Now which group do I want to be recalled

by? [Laughter] My husband would be the first one to sign the papers
[Laughter]

YATES Oh really? Well talk about the early days when you first went on the board. Now this is about a month after the bankruptcy became public knowledge. What happened? What did the board do?

BERGESON Well of course we spent most of the time with attorneys. I mean we were locked up with attorneys all the time. Of course those of us who were new we had to be brought up. You know what was actually happening—where all the problems existed and what in a sense had caused it to happen.

One of the strengths I think with the recover was bringing in Tom Hayes and Tom Hayes was a former director with the Department of Finance. In fact he and I ran on that same '90 slate. He was running for treasurer. I guess. Yes he was defeated in that election by Kathleen Brown and he was the appointed treasurer at that time.

YATES Oh OK.

BERGESON He's the one that was appointed after Dan Lundgren was denied confirmation by the senate. And so then he was

YATES Oh I see. Yes I see him [listed] here on the general election.

BERGESON Yeah. And I just had a lot of confidence in Tom and bringing him in to help out to reconfigure the investment pool. You know to try to make some sense out of it and structure it so that it could be built on a

foundation of trust as well as credibility

We were there fourteen sixteen hours a day We were there every Saturday and Sunday you know going through papers and it was just And then the meetings People would just get up and they'd scream and I mean literally And we had every news channel in the United States In fact I had a trip to the Russian Far East and they knew about it During that period of time we were setting up a local government team with Leo McCarthy and they knew about the bankruptcy in Siberia so I mean it was pretty much world known But I recall when I was running for office I said One of the difficulties that Orange County had was that we lived in a media vacuum because we were sort of a stepsister to Los Angeles and to all of the media markets that came from the networks out of Los Angeles And I felt that was unfortunate that Orange County And of course the first day of the Board of Supervisors we have thirty five cameras [Laughter] So much for the media vacuum

YATES You went from nothing to too much

BERGESON So much for the media vacuum and we became the media capital In fact we had calls from every newspaper and they all knew our home phone numbers and they would call us Like I'd get a call on Sunday wanting to know if the other paper had called if there was anything that they needed to know But it was just this constant media fest It was like it was almost cannibalistic! And then they brought up the fact that I had Someone

had discovered that some of the bills that got out of my committee actually brought on the bankruptcy Well of course

YATES You mean the Local Government Committee?

BERGESON Yeah

YATES So what did that mean? What were they referring to?

BERGESON Well that's what I needed to find out

YATES OK

BERGESON And so I called my staff assistant immediately and I said "Research every bill that's come out of our committee and try to find out what all this is about if there are any bills in any way that helped to bring about or could be in any way causative as far as the bankruptcy or the type of investments that were made ' And he came back and he says You know your record is clean There's nothing there I had put in a bill that had allowed for B plus investments for short periods of time It was a way that would allow for investments to be made but there were safeguards put in that would disallow a lot of things In fact it disallowed the very thing he had involved himself with But unfortunately when we drafted the bill there were no penalties

YATES For doing it?

BERGESON Yeah You know it didn't say This is punishable by such and such But I mean he violated the provisions of the bill So there were actually these safeguards and in looking—in fact we looked at all of the bonds that

were affected—these were the best bonds that they had I mean they were protected It was the A Rated bonds long term which were really the ones that caused the most difficulty because those are the ones which they collateralized against in other words that formed the nucleus and some of those were leveraged up to seven times their original value and that's where you had defaults

YATES Well tell me Let's see I recently read an article "When Government Fails The Orange County Bankruptcy" talking about the whole bankruptcy thing It's out of the Public Policy [Institute of California] But I read in there that it said that Orange County relied more on interest income than other counties in California

BERGESON Oh yeah Yeah

YATES Explain what that means Why is that? And this is tied into the kind of investments he was making

BERGESON Right He was reaching tremendous proportions of Well counties in California were having a really tough time during this period of time It was during the time that the state had recovered much of the property tax revenue to balance the budget at the state level and Orange County was doing very well I mean they were not having the same problems In hearing during the bankruptcy and looking at the books the county had been receiving about a third of their income from interest income general fund revenue coming from interest income And at some point of time it

was as much as 16 percent interest. I mean, that's a pretty high percentage of interest. And where Mr. Citron got into difficulty was when he took some of that excess and put it into a county fund—this was actually taking money from other pool investors. In other words, he padded the county fund in order to protect against the reverses of property tax income. Or is that property tax or credit rating? Senior moment.

YATES: That's OK.

BERGESON: Oh, geez. Alan Greenspan, what does he do [Laughter]?

YATES: Oh, yeah. Well, I'm having a senior moment myself.

BERGESON: [Laughter] Well, anyway, when he gets the credit rate. Not the credit rating, but the

YATES: I'm not that eloquent on finances so

BERGESON: But at least, you know. Suddenly the percentage goes up and down, you need some protection. And, of course, the protection there was that some of this money then had been used from the other bond investors' portion. Then that interest income went into the county fund. And that's where he actually ran into difficulty. That's where the criminal activity. It's the interest rates! That's what I'm talking about.

YATES: OK, this article says, "His strategy was to use the funds on deposit to borrow money to invest in derivatives."

BERGESON: Right.

YATES: inverse floaters and long-term bonds that paid high yields. He then

borrowed more money with the borrowed money as collateral '

BERGESON Yeah See he just kept leveraging that to borrow more

YATES OK

BERGESON But it was all based on paper money and so he had Some of it was leveraged up to seven times its original value

YATES Yeah this says "In FY 94 interest amounted to 12 percent of revenue for Orange County in contrast to 3 percent for all other California counties

BERGESON Right Right

YATES So that's the difference is that he's using the interest and

BERGESON That's it

YATES reinvesting in these other things that weren't necessarily reliable in return with the downturn in the economy That's when he ran into

BERGESON Yeah when the interest rates went up then everything fouled up

YATES OK

BERGESON Of course if he'd been able to wait A lot of people said Why did they go bankrupt? Because if they'd held out Because the interest rates went down But they didn't have the liquidity In other words there was not the ability to be able to pay the bills because they didn't have the cash on hand for payroll and the other large items We had all these investors and we actually had investors from as far north as Well some of the northern California cities other school districts that actually

came into invest I mean they came to Orange County to invest because they were doing so well

YATES That was another thing I didn't realize was how many other counties were doing this joining up because it gave them the advantage of pooling

BERGESON Well San Diego was right on the verge they were doing much the same thing as Orange County But because it happened to Orange County they got out in a hurry and they were able to restructure some of their investments in a way to protect themselves Well San Jose City had gone through a very similar thing We used some of what they had done to get themselves out of bankruptcy But they were in the same position at one point and time as Orange County but Orange County because of the wide scope of the problem and the amount of dollars and the many investors that were in it Some school districts actually went out and borrowed money to invest so they could build their income level And everybody just looked at it as a great feeding trough This is wonderful Look at what Orange County's doing And as I say it became a campaign issue against Tom Hayes because he wasn't using the same practices and then all of a sudden when the bottom fell out everybody says Well who's responsible for this? And the Board of Supervisors depended on the treasurer They had very little oversight There was no oversight

YATES That was another question I had

BERGESON And there was no disclosure There was no disclosure

YATES I want to come back to the structure of the system and the problems there but back to when you were initially on the board and you're dealing with this problem what were the solutions that you came up with and how did you come up with them in order to counteract the bankruptcy?

BERGESON First of all we had to assure Wall Street that we had the ability to be able to repay Now the first effort was to go for a sales tax and of course that was dead on arrival but we had to make that effort because unless you can prove that you're making every effort to be able to recoup and to repay your creditors And so the sales tax went down and

YATES Right The voters rejected it in June 95 ¹

BERGESON The voters rejected it soundly They thought it should come out of our salaries Well of course [Laughter] The rationale in those days was you know just beat us to death and try to I mean it was just a terrible period of time and if you were on the Board of Supervisors you were probably one of the most despised bodies that ever existed simply because of what had happened and it was just so inexcusable

And I think the one thing that was really damaging as far as the board was that on the consent calendar was an authorization to sell some \$200 million dollars worth of bonds It was one of these Las Vegas deals that was just incredible But I mean it was the sort of thing that the supervisors simply had not involved themselves with Without oversight

1 Measure R (June 1995) sales tax increase

and without disclosure to the investors to know what was happening it happened But when

YATES But it sounds like you anticipated that this proposed 1/2 cent sales tax was not going to go

BERGESON Well we couldn't even get the cities to support it and the cities were the ones that were going to be the recipients because it would help to pay the obligation the county had to the cities Because most all of them had money in the pool and of course that money would be First thing we did was to restructure it so that education didn't have to suffer the greatest liability that they could be the first ones paid when and if money was available

Well we structured a legislative package and this was worked with Tom Hayes through the legislature In fact we met with Willie Brown which became an infamous meeting because we felt we better try to get support to see what we could do and find out what could be supported in the assembly and then work with the legislature Willie Brown was the imminent power at that point and time And of course we needed the governor We were working closely with the governor but the governor made it clear There's no bailout In fact he said right from the beginning We're not bailing out the county They've got to figure out a way And so the legislative solution was to sequester the VLF funds those are the vehicle license funds that come to the county Those would

be sequestered In the event that the county were to default on not being able to come up with the dollars then that would be held in a way of covering the debt obligation And so that effort was successful I mean that was not going to cost the state anything but it did place that effort on the county with the means by which they could fulfill the debt obligation It wouldn't fall back to the state It would definitely be our own money that would be used and that helped with the bond investors They were here They were flooding us all the time trying to find out and trying to determine our future financial viability And of course we had no capability for selling bonds then because our rating

YATES Your credit rating was gone

BERGESON In the tank yeah And then of course we had COPs the certificate of participation which means that every facility we had we were offering up as collateral for debt obligation I mean it was just bit by bit and piece by piece trying to find ways to give some assurance that we have the ability in the long term to pay off debt obligation And we restructured the pool trying to then give some assurance that there would be a safe manageable method of investing and obtaining the kind of oversight that was necessary We created oversight committees professionally very well qualified individuals who would watch the investment policies and make sure that everything was on target and we brought in a CEO a chief executive officer [William J] Bill Popejoy came in He was our first

CEO and he went through a lot of restructuring and so forth and then had problems with the board. So he left and then Jan Mittermeier, who had actually been the manager of John Wayne [Orange County] Airport, was hired as the CEO and worked well at trying to set up business plans and getting the county in a more accountable mode than what they had been before.

Prior to that, the organization of accounting—and this is where we had the problems frankly—was we had a chief administrative officer who reported directly to the board and all of the department heads reported to the board, so no one was really in charge. There was no single figure of authority or one system of management that everybody had to be held accountable. It was sort of everybody did their thing and the board said yes or no, and a lot of it was done just on the basis of who they knew and who'd been there for years and there hadn't been. You know, the county was running well. Until problems exist, a lot of the tough questions aren't asked, and so those questions didn't even get asked until after the county declared bankruptcy.

YATES: Well, one question I had was—if you can answer the question—why do you think this happened?

BERGESON: Well, I think two reasons: lack of oversight and lack of public disclosure. If either of those had existed then there would have been an early warning sign that the problem was there and whatever could have been done prior

to that time to avoid this. We became the early warning sign for San Diego.

YATES: I was interested in your saying that because I know some people were saying, "Well, this was an aberration. This is Orange County," but I've also read the argument that this really isn't an aberration.

BERGESON: No, it's not and, in fact, it could happen again.

YATES: And then, you know, to talk about Prop. 13 again, what role do you think that plays in putting pressure on local governments to find ways to raise money?

BERGESON: Well, you know, I think the legislature has always encouraged creative methods of producing revenue because what Sacramento produces has generally been inadequate, and so creative methods are generally generated and new methods sometimes are beyond the scope of regulation. And even though the state, I think, has certain responsibilities, we run the risk of saying we want to regulate too much, you take away any effort to assume that there's any trust, or you provide so much trust that there's little or no accountability. How do you get to that happy medium to provide for creative efforts that could be very constructive without destroying those in order to assure that people aren't going to do dumb things? And you're constantly running that risk. And the government generally tends to over-correct. You know, once you have a problem, then everybody's got a bill to solve it. And our problems become

our big I mean our solutions become our problems in future years
 And as we've had with a lot of the assessment districts such as Mello
 Roos things are put in place and they're done primarily with the effort of
 solving an immediate problem in response to Prop 13

YATES But do you think that Prop 13 does have some kind of impact on how
 governments are looking to raise funds?

BERGESON A lot of it has to do with understanding the role of county government
 and that's where I had a lot of my problems with county government
 because

YATES It's very complicated too

BERGESON counties primarily manage other people's programs I mean they
 become the managers of the health and welfare system they become the
 managers of what you have to do with the Medi-Cal problems I mean most
 of these are state programs and federal government programs I mean
 they have so many entities that they have to deal with that it's a very
 complex system of management The day of the great land barons is
 pretty much at an end in Orange County because most of the county is
 now incorporated formerly suburban areas are actually becoming urban
 And we have less than 6 or 8 percent of the population now served in
 unincorporated areas And a lot of the functions of county government are
 in joint powers authority You have the fire authority you have the
 transportation authority water authorities And you wonder what do

boards of supervisors do? Well if they didn't have an El Toro in Orange County I'm not sure what they would do because they're not willing to assume responsibility for health care

YATES The board?

BERGESON You may have seen my op-ed piece this Sunday in the paper?

YATES Oh this was just last Sunday? No I didn't get to the paper yet I only got partway through the paper

BERGESON It's in the Orange County section

YATES Oh OK then I wouldn't have seen it

BERGESON Yeah But I mean it's pointing out over the history of time how the county has neglected its ability to deal with uncompensated health care costs and we now have an initiative We're running government by initiative primarily because of the lack of responsibility or leadership on the part of people to be able to take these issues and to deal with them where the public perceives that problems should be resolved

YATES Well let me ask you about the role of the state in the Orange County bankruptcy because again in the same article there was the point that California at the state level was not willing to intervene which I think you just referred to with Pete Wilson

BERGESON No bailout

YATES Right And they use an example I guess there was a similar situation in New York where they did and I was wondering what you thought the role

of the state should be in terms of dealing with this situation and in comparison to what happened?

BERGESON Well you know I would not have supported an effort such as that in New York when they had their terrible trash problems a few years back The problems in Orange County were solvable by the locals It would take leadership it would take commitment and that's why we went for the sales tax We thought that if the people are willing to support And of course a wonderful thing happened and that is the economy picked up and frankly had the economy not picked up the county would still be having problems But understand when the bankruptcy occurred the only people that were directly affected were those receiving county services In other words the poor the indigent the criminals in the jails I mean the people that ordinarily there's not a lot of sensitivity for Businesses weren't affected because they really didn't see the impact of what county government provides because those services were not that important to them And eventually though it would reach them I mean if you had to continue to turn people out of jails and not have the services required that people need Cities actually have a lot of indigents that the county has to be responsible for The cities oftentimes don't provide these services such as health care needs You know when you have an epidemic of some type it's the county that has to provide for this not the cities but the cities would be impacted because those people would be living within their city

boundaries. So I mean eventually I think had the county not recovered financially in a way that the economy made more jobs available people placed less stress on county services then I think we probably would have seen a different picture. But the economy has been a wonderful thing. Orange County's one of the strongest counties right now. Unemployment is like 2 percent and the county service needs of course are obviously proportionally less.

YATES: I also saw that there was a proposal to restructure regional government. That also went before the voters. Is that correct?

BERGESON: There was a charter. That was one of my efforts that didn't do too well.

YATES: Well, talk about that a little bit.

BERGESON: There were several things that I did while I was here that were not very well received but I think timing is everything. Eventually they will. One was a complete restructuring. I mean I had a proposal—it was called 2001—which would have changed the way county government was run. It would become more orientated towards a strict accountability mode. In fact we actually suggested an elected county mayor as opposed to having an appointed CEO to give him or her authority and then having a board that would be expanded with greater responsibilities but not the duplication of offices where everybody had to do the same functions. You know you'd have more representation from a larger. I mean where you'd have more involvement with the people within those regional areas.

or jurisdictions

Then the other issue that we dealt with was the charter which was to change several aspects one being to appoint the treasurer and also the county auditor So rather than having county auditors elected we would make sure that we had the people in positions doing responsible things who had the training and background to do those things And several other issues I've sort of forgotten what a lot of them were We had a committee that was designed to review and recommend what would provide a much stronger accountability level within the county The voters turned it down I mean they just weren't ready They just felt

YATES I was going to say why do you think—I mean I can guess—but why do you think the voters just kept rejecting any attempts to reform or change?

BERGESON Well the largest argument was We want to elect the people ' They didn't want to eliminate any elected

YATES Even though

BERGESON You know Even if they're crooks they're our crooks You know that sort of thing [Laughter]

YATES I mean because we're seeing some of this play out obviously with the insurance commissioner right now with [Charles] Quackenbush and the whole issue of That became an elected office And there was a certain amount of irony in that

BERGESON Well it's funny because when it comes down to eliminating elected

offices people don't want to do it. They still feel that the public has a right to make these decisions and I guess democracy has never been what you call neat you know? And I think allowing a complete democratic process where everybody has an opportunity to vote on it. I mean it could become very tedious and very cumbersome and sometimes make a lot of mistakes but I think the public still is demanding that their wishes be recognized by having that right available to them.

Then the other area that I thought was really important was trying to analyze where county government was. We didn't even know what was going on in a lot of areas. And so we developed what we called the Government Practices Oversight Committee which was made up of individuals who were knowledgeable and astute. I mean having had experience. They were people involved in government to some extent they were also citizens who had a good expertise and understanding of various business management components. We put together this committee that spent untold hours—this was volunteer—and they presented a report. And it recommended privatization of some areas of a concern such as the harbor patrol. You know that they could have been taken over by the [Fire and] Marine Department of Newport [Beach] that was doing a lot of the same functions. We found that there were people that did seamstress work for the Harbor Patrol that were getting sheriffs to pay [Laughter] where a lot of those could be contracted out. A lot of

recommendations I think were very valid and they were simply ignored I don't know whether the board just resented the fact that there were suggestions made that they weren't involved in. The CEO wasn't particularly happy about it either. So those recommendations went by the wayside but it was kind of a turnoff for a lot of people who had been involved in what they considered to be a very responsible and I think a very energetic effort to really make government work more effectively and efficiently.

YATES Let me ask you one last question related to this and I was reminded when you were talking about—I don't know how long this went on for but initially at least—the camera crews and people there various entities wanting to recall you or anyone on the board for that matter and I was

BERGESON Well it was everyone on the board

YATES Yeah right Right

BERGESON The public didn't like any one of us [Laughter]

YATES It didn't matter whether you'd just come on the board or not

BERGESON No they were just mad at us

YATES And I was reminded when I was reading about the Brown Act and the impact of the board in an emergency situation not having to have open meetings which is obviously a plus but how did that help or hinder the board's abilities to do something?

BERGESON What happened as a result of the The requirements of the Brown Act

were so specific as far as board members meeting and the requirements for notification even though there's some provisions. I mean we held a lot of closed door meetings with our attorneys but it was nearly impossible for planning and trying to get things that we needed to get in place. What it did actually was thrust a lot of the responsible decision making into the business community and so there was a group of businessmen who were brought in to review and analyze and to actually plan for a recovery plan. And of course the board was involved but in a way that. We were really more after the fact you know? Because much of what was done was done through the media. I mean because they could talk freely you know what they were doing which was comprised of the sheriff the district attorney Bill Popejoy who was the CEO and then we had Gary Hunt and George [L] Argyros people who were very significantly involved in corporate efforts in the county with very strong business backgrounds fully understanding you know? And I think they pretty well took over a lot of the initial planning as far as what the county needed to do and they were the ones generally that came up with the suggestion on the sales tax and presented it to the board. The board was rather reluctant to accept that and I think it was a—I can't remember—a 3-2 vote as far as supporting

YATES The proposal?

BERGESON Yeah I thought it was hypocritical not to support it if you're going to put

it on the ballot. So there were three of us that were willing to take that tough stand which you know we took a lot of political flack for it too but I mean if you're going to put it on the ballot and you're going to say this is necessary to get what we need to do to make our investments sound and get our creditors paid off you have to do it. And if the public doesn't want to do it then we have to find another way you know? At least giving the advantage of every opportunity

[End Tape 8 Side A]

[Session 6 August 9 2000]

[Begin Tape 9 Side A]

YATES We were just chatting for a minute about our plans for today. Last time we met, you finished the session by talking about your election to the Board of Supervisors. We really focused on the bankruptcy issue, which obviously, I'm sure, dominated things. But I thought maybe we could start today by talking about some of the other issues that were before the board at the time. And maybe you could identify those and then talk about that a little bit.

BERGESON Well, actually, I was elected to the Board of Supervisors in the June primary because there was no opposition. However, I would not be taking office until January so there was a long period of time when I was able to become familiar with the issues before the county. A bit of irony because a lot of the issues presumably were to be taken care of according to my predecessor, Tom Riley, who said, "We'll get the tough issues out of the way so you'll be able to really enjoy your tenure while you're a member of the Board of Supervisors." Of course, that was preceding the bankruptcy.

But the issue coming before the board probably with the greatest prominence at that point was the determination as to what use [United States Marine Corps Air Station] El Toro would be put to which was being closed And there was an initiative on the ballot that was to determine whether or not an airport would be considered as the best use of that property El Toro being large in size some 4700 acres that currently provided for runways air transportation access but had been only used for military use There had been some efforts to try to have joint use which had been unsuccessful and that was primarily at the insistence of Newport Beach where I lived to avoid the further expansion of John Wayne[Orange County] Airport which is an airport that has limited potential for expansion However being the only airport in the county it was looked upon in a rather threatening way by the people in Newport with the possibility of expanding beyond that which would be reasonable for noise pollution and so forth

YATES When you say joint use of El Toro what do you mean?

BERGESON Would be for commercial or general aviation as well as military and that was not acceptable to the military and so the conversations were pretty much terminated

YATES OK I'm sorry go ahead

BERGESON But when the base was to close down then this was an opportunity then

particularly for the folks in Newport to say Now we finally have an opportunity to develop a full scale airport that will meet the regional needs of Orange County as well as other uses for international traffic at El Toro ' That of course became very controversial in that folks that lived in south county had great concerns over the impact of their communities from the noise pollution—factors of course—and they considered their communities not compatible with air transportation particularly an international airport where you would have twenty four hour service And that became an issue in the campaign However by very small majority the voters voted to put the airport at El Toro And presuming that then took care of that controversy of course I was told no more problems that's resolved and now you will enjoy your tenure on the Board of Supervisors That of course has continued to fester until this time

YATES Right it was just in the paper recently I think

BERGESON as an issue that is fraught with controversy and has literally split the county with pro airport anti airport And a recent ballot measure was successful—two thirds majority actually—that would require a two thirds majority vote for any further expansion of airports land fills and jails which are considered to be what we call the NIMBY—not in my backyard—issues that in order to site or to expand would require two thirds vote by the electorate And it won overwhelmingly So it was felt

to be a referendum on the use of El Toro as an international airport and of course that issue continues because Measure A which was the ballot initiative that was successful in land use provisions siting an airport as opposed to Measure F¹ which required the two thirds majority Still in the courts and still being fought In fact the only people that have really benefited have been the attorneys over the years because of continuing lawsuits on this issue

YATES So the timing on this was that the voters as you said narrowly passed approving an airport at El Toro Was that in the election before you went on the board? Right?

BERGESON Well before I was sworn in Actually that been decided and then the authorities set up for that had Or I should say Measure A² had provided that the Board of Supervisors would be the sole authority for the determination or developing the plan or the land use for the airport

YATES I see

BERGESON And that was in place and you know plans were going forward accordingly The EIR the environmental impact report was being developed based on that

Other issues that also developed were expansion of a jail At the

1 Measure F (March 2000) Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative

2 Measure A (November 1994) Orange County/El Toro Economic Stimulus Initiative

time that I took office there were court orders opposing early release of prisoners and the overcrowding of the jails. So obviously there was a great need to expand jail facilities to take care of additional prisoners who needed to either be housed for a short period of time during trial or for those that were given sentences in the jail.

YATES: What was the facility again where this was going to happen?

BERGESON: There is currently an honor farm right next to El Toro as a matter of fact but it's within the city influence of both Irvine and Mission Viejo. I believe it's Mission Viejo, Lake Forest or Mission Viejo where it has been a minimum security and would have been expanded to maximum security and would have housed, I believe, an additional 7000 inmates. I'm not certain of that figure but it was a rather substantial expansion. And again, the surrounding communities were very upset about the potential of bringing in a maximum security facility where it was adjacent to businesses, businesses literally backed right up to the fence that separated the jail. So there was a good deal of controversy. South county residents were very strongly opposed to siting that facility in their backyard.

YATES: Sounds like you had an exciting time.

BERGESON: It was fraught with issues even notwithstanding the bankruptcy. So those issues were being deliberated and then of course the bankruptcy

hit and

YATES Well I imagine that with the bankruptcy that must have taken up a lot of your time So I was wondering how the board was able to tackle any of these other issues or how effective they were

BERGESON Well the immediate concern was the bankruptcy and we spent literally fourteen eighteen hours a day every day of the week spent mostly meeting with attorneys and then responding to public outcry We sat through many many hearings The outraged public protested and of course there was no separation between the supervisors who had been on the board and those that had just come on the board There were two new members

YATES Right you and who was the other one?

BERGESON Jim Silva We both took office in January January 6 1995

YATES You ll never forget that date I m sure [Laughter]

BERGESON Infamous day And consequently the public s outrage was manifested at almost every board meeting and we had packed houses and it went on to a point where we were all personally attacked It was a very ugly time and you could not have had I mean the timing couldn t have been worse for coming on and assuming that there was a role for you to play other than just to be used as a dart board during these meetings And we were able to develop strategies to get out of bankruptcy part of them legislative

and then part of them through certificates of participation which are taking a loan against your capital facilities and other ways that we were able to finally remove the shroud of bankruptcy And then of course the other issues became more of a focus then because these needs were continuing to have to be resolved or have to be dealt with

YATES There was some resolution even if it was in small steps

BERGESON Yeah the resolution had to be made of those particular issues

YATES Well I imagine—I'm just guessing—that you and of course probably Jim Silva must have felt discouraged? Or maybe that's not the right word but how did you feel about trying to tackle this?

BERGESON It was emotionally and physically draining I mean it was a very very difficult time to have to deal with issues of this type It was a very traumatic very difficult time I had made a decision to go on the board even though I knew it was not going to be a particularly pleasing experience I could have stayed in the senate I had two years left on my term I actually called to find out if I could stay and yes I could have but I felt it would be a rather cowardly act and that perhaps I could be of some help with my experience in the legislature and that probably the timing was good that I could probably be of help to the board And I think it was I think ultimately it was sort of a sacrificial effort but once we got through the bankruptcy and the issues were resolved and we were able to get that

behind us then

I mean there was a residue because of course the county was without the funds to do a lot of the required responsibilities. And a lot of the cutbacks had been made and very painfully so and people that need services. Many in the county never felt the bankruptcy because if you don't depend on government services you would never know because the economy was starting to quicken industry was coming into the county starting to rebuild after a very very deep recession because of the cutbacks during the federal defense contracts and so forth. The county was restructuring its economic activity. Expansion was going on. But the people that were hurt of course were those that use the county services indigent care the health services welfare services. Of course the jails were cut back considerably again causing greater problems because of having to early release people who shouldn't be on the streets. So wherever there was a county service that was provided it was felt. I mean those problems persisted until we were able to build back to a point where either through the state paying for some of those services that they normally pay for. I mean that were required. Because also state revenues were starting to come in as the economy improved and of course the subventions to local government also improved along with that. So I mean it was building and then not long after that I had the call

from the governor asking if I would be interested in coming back and serving as secretary of education. Actually, it was secretary of child development and education.

YATES Right

BERGESON Because Governor Wilson was very much involved with [California Department of Education] Healthy Start and other preventive programs that would involve more in child development, preschool programs, and the like, so that it would be a preschool or an early childhood actually through the university system. And that was the way he envisioned the office, which has changed its structure since then, but that was the really

YATES At what point did you get the call about that position?

BERGESON Well, actually, I received the call fairly soon. It was rather interesting the timing because I think I got the call two nights after I had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

YATES Oh

BERGESON And that gave me some concern. And I did indicate to the governor at that time, I had not told a lot of people at that time, but I told him that I was going to have to go through surgery and I was not certain of the outcome at that point and wanted him to know that, that you know, this may be something that I would not be able to consider until I had definite information as to what my future health situation was going to be. And he

was very understanding. And I also felt that I needed to have sufficient time to be able to make certain that I had covered responsibilities at the county before. You know, I didn't want to feel that I was leaving the county at a time when they really needed to have continuity of support for the solutions that we had started. And so it was some time from the time that I got my first call before I finally went to Sacramento. I went in August and I think the call was early spring when I first heard from

YATES So in '96?

BERGESON So there was a time lapse there from the time I had heard and the But I had never indicated to anyone that I had even been considering it. I didn't think it was very wise at that point. And until the governor actually made the pronouncement. In fact, I literally had to be smuggled into Sacramento to have the announcement made. I couldn't tell my staff. I couldn't tell anyone, you know?

YATES That's difficult.

BERGESON There was currently a woman serving as secretary of child development and education so there needed to be a smooth transition and so that was primarily the reason for it.

YATES So you got the call you said in spring, I think? Early spring? And then the announcement was actually in August?

BERGESON Yeah, before I really decided that I felt it was appropriate for me to go

and

YATES Now what about your health? How are you doing?

BERGESON Fine Everything I had a clean bill of health The surgery was successful and everything came out fine No problems So that was taken care of

YATES So you waited until you felt comfortable with that before you made a decision?

BERGESON Yeah That was part of it and then

YATES That must have been a difficult time

BERGESON The whole time And I still feel a lot of health problems are brought about by stress and it was a very stressful time It was an experience that I look back at and I can remember that it was pretty agonizing for my staff because they hated to see me put through a lot of the personal I mean it was a vilification It was just very difficult to have to withstand and you can't argue because you're just there And you're sort of there as kind of a point I'd look around at the groups and I'd think Now which group would I really prefer being recalled by you know? [Laughter]

YATES Right I remember you mentioning that there were so many different people or groups who because of the bankruptcy

BERGESON They all had their Well you had the cities that were upset because we lost their money We had the school districts—they were mad because we lost their money The one thing that I did do that I think was

significant was to assure that the schools would get their first call on the dollars because they're required to deposit their money in the county treasury. Some of them invested, which was not a wise thing to do, and that was not part of their responsibilities. The responsibility is to deposit them and that's the repository for the dollars that come from the state so that they can be utilized as they need them so that they

YATES But they didn't have necessarily the responsibility of investing it?

BERGESON Well, they don't have the statutory. I mean, they didn't have the obligation to invest, yeah.

YATES I wasn't using the right terminology. OK.

BERGESON Yeah. But many did invest funds because the returns they were getting on their investment was higher. And we had people coming from out of the county, actually, that were investing.

YATES Now, I think I may have mentioned this last time but I remember seeing something in the paper not that long ago about Claremont, where I live, because they'd chosen. I don't know what the options were for those outside of the county who had invested, but they were able to realize, you know, a return of whatever they're funding. And I hadn't realized how complicated and widespread this was, that there was all these different entities. Because obviously, if you pool your resources, you get a better return.

BERGESON Yeah right And you know this was recognized statewide Everybody was marveling Thirty percent of the budget in Orange County at that time was actually from interest income the general fund budget

YATES Right It wasn't until I had read that in the paper that I you know realized all these other local governments had been investing in that also

BERGESON Yeah school districts too

YATES Well what made you really decide that you did want to take the position of secretary of child development and education?

BERGESON That I did want to?

YATES Yeah I mean I know you felt like your health was in You know you were OK but

BERGESON Well when everything looked like there wasn't a challenge for bankruptcy recovery left to the board I mean there were a lot of challenges in the board's responsibility but because education had always been at the forefront of my own experience both professionally as well as from my legislative experience And of course it was a great time because there was a real change in the attitude towards our schools and a great deal of reform was being proposed and needed at that time California schools had just been termed as the worst in the nation because of our scores on a national test and the timing was that something had to be done We needed some dramatic changes and I'd always felt that need myself I felt

that we needed to assure literacy of students particularly those in low income urban areas that we need to do a much better job of educating those kids getting good teachers into those schools And I felt like it was a challenge that I could become totally committed to which I did and that's why I assumed the responsibility

YATES Before you talk some about what you were actually involved in in that position talk a little bit about the background of that position because as you mentioned I think it was a fairly recent position that had been created Is that right?

BERGESON Right The secretary of child development and education was initiated by Governor Wilson at the time that he was elected governor and that was in 1990 And the reason for that was that he felt strongly that education should have a spokesperson on his cabinet yet still to this day has not been statutorily authorized And a lot of it was a controversy between Then at that point you had a Republican governor a Democrat superintendent of public instruction and a Democrat controlled legislature and so there The partisan The response was that you know keep the superintendent of public instruction working with the Democrat controlled legislature However realistically the superintendent has very little authority and the actual policy development role only in an advisory way No vote of course No real authority The [California] State Board

of Education has the authority for policy The State Board of Education is appointed by the governor and the Department of Education is essentially run by the superintendent so tremendous bifurcation of authority or lack of definition of who s in charge

YATES Well if the secretary position is not statutory what real authority does that person have?

BERGESON It doesn't have any it's strictly an advisory authority

YATES OK

BERGESON And working with the governor and really working as kind of a liaison between the governor's office the State Board of Education and the legislature And that was primarily the role I mean in advancing the governor's agenda in recommending areas of priority working with the governor in bringing forward policy issues that should be addressed The budget to accommodate that as well as the statutory authorizations that would be needed to implement the programs And the reform effort had already been initiated but I think it was primarily through one or two grades at that time for class size reduction We decided to go for four grades which was kindergarten through third grade and this was done a lot through review throughout the state I went with a cadre of individuals throughout California listening to superintendents and to principals teachers parents on class size reduction issues the cost of it We

increased the budget to fully pay for the cost of the class size reduction
 Heretofore it had been partially paid for and of course many districts
 were having a difficult time implementing class size reduction

YATES Right Because they didn't have the space or they were scrambling

BERGESON They didn't have the space and so with class size reduction money was
 allocated for relocate ables so that they could bring in portables until they
 could pass bonds or have some way of expanding their facilities

The reason for class size reduction in primary grades—and that's
 why it was specified specifically—was because of literacy needs and
 assuring that kids would learn how to read And that also required
 initiating a new reading program and that was phonics based using
 decoding skills phonemic systems There had been a philosophy that
 many feel and I personally did that contributed a lot to reading problems
 It's called whole language and it lacked specific basic strategies for how
 kids learn how to read and consequently we had many children going all
 the way through school because of social promotion that were functionally
 illiterate They were not able to read or compute

And the other programs of course were to bring back a basic
 structure for fundamental skills in math or arithmetic as well and then
 building on that new academic content standards that would raise
 cognitive skills to the point where we would have world class

performance levels and expectations for performance would be increased substantially. And that particular process was being accommodated during the time that I was secretary developing the standards that were being used and those were in the core subjects which are language arts, math, history, social science, and science. And those core subject areas would then be developed with a framework for the curriculum materials that would be aligned with those standards grade by grade. This lays out a format where teachers would know what to teach, students would know what they were expected to learn, and parents would be there to reinforce and to understand what was expected of their kids. And that in a sense was the format. We had standards, we had assessment, and yet to be developed accountability. We had a great deal of difficulty getting a good bill through the legislature, but subsequently the new administration has been successful in that. These standards would be measured by performance levels and then an accountability system would assure that consequences occur for successes and for lack of success.

YATES: Now, on a real practical level, I'm thinking when you first went into this position. And, of course, there had been somebody there before, and remind me now, was she there for the whole first six years of

BERGESON: She was there for. It would have been six years.

YATES: So there's only been one person in this position prior to your taking it?

BERGESON Right She was the first Maureen DiMarco was the first secretary of child development and education

YATES Right

BERGESON And then I filled it for the last two years actually

YATES Right So when you went in obviously you knew that the term was limited right?

BERGESON Right

YATES That's one question I had in terms of your thinking about how you would envision the position and what you would be able to accomplish But I guess really what I wanted to start with was on a practical level you go up there How do you work with Governor Wilson to develop an agenda and then follow through on it?

BERGESON Well of course having worked with the governor during the time I was in the legislature we worked very compatibly I mean I carried a lot of the administration's legislation and I had carried a lot of education legislation prior to that And of course he had appointed me as superintendent of public instruction

YATES Right

BERGESON We also had really focused on a lot of the education issues at that time And I felt two years I was looking too in terms of how long I wanted to be involved in elected office And of course I was approaching an age

when I knew that I wasn't going to go on forever even though we think we're going to go on forever. But there's a reality pitch. You have to assume that there are years where you can be effective and what you need to do during those productive years. Of course, much would have depended on the new administration as well.

YATES Sure

BERGESON Had a Republican governor been elected then I would assume that I would have maintained some role or at least have some influence even if just transition to make certain that a lot of the things that we started would be continuing. And I felt had I stayed on the Orange County Board of Supervisors that because of the controversies with El Toro probably there was very little chance that I would want to run for re-election again anyway because my hometown was in complete opposition to the position of 85 percent in the district. And it was a very difficult district for me from a personal point of view to represent where I've always been very conscientious about listening to the wishes of the voters and where you have such an adamant and I mean almost an adversarial role to play there. To me it was a very difficult role that I wasn't real comfortable with. And so that's why with education it was really just beginning and there would be a continuing if not active role with the governor at least in some way of being able to hopefully have a voice in continuing the

reforms that I think most of us feel are very very significant and important

YATES Were there any aspects of Governor Wilson's agenda for education that you didn't agree with?

BERGESON Well wherever I had a disagreement I told him and he made a decision I think with [Proposition] 187¹ we did have a disagreement on whether or not children who were undocumented or here illegally should be attending schools and I felt they belonged at schools and the governor did have a different position But I felt you know as a staff member to the governor I would always support his positions and

YATES I was wondering how you handled that kind of

BERGESON Well you're a staff member you know? And that was exactly the position I would take The governor's positions were such that I would work to see that they were implemented and carried out I think that's the role that you take when you're a member of the cabinet I mean I feel somewhat the same as a member of the State Board of Education now as an appointee Well I'm an appointee as provided from both Governor Wilson and Governor [Gray] Davis the positions that I take on the board are those that the governor That's the role that the board has is to reinforce and support the governor's education positions

1 Proposition 187 (November 1994) illegal aliens ineligibility for public services verification and reporting

YATES OK But you felt comfortable talking to him about I mean you could have discussions with Wilson for example

BERGESON Oh absolutely Yeah yeah

YATES about topics that maybe you didn't agree with or

BERGESON You know the role of an adviser is to do just that You give the governor what you consider to be your advice the position I mean you can weigh this with the pros and cons and then the governor makes the decision and you back whatever position the governor makes And I think when people look back at what has happened during Wilson's administration Governor Wilson did far more for education than any governor that we've ever had from the initiation of new programs He had a time when we were The worst recession that we've had since the Great Depression and many feel in California it was probably as bad as the Great Depression and the fact they had catastrophe after catastrophe every man What do they call them? Anyway those types of things you have no control over

YATES Man made you mean disasters?

BERGESON Not necessarily man made They're non-man-made disasters

YATES Natural?

BERGESON Yeah natural disasters We had a series of them that were just unparalleled in the history of the state And so many things happened

Wilson's initial plan of course was a very ambitious plan for providing access to very young children to health care through the Healthy Start program and for early education remediation prevention and then a good strong basic educational foundation. And during the time of the recession it was very difficult to develop and implement these programs. In fact if anything we were cutting back. While serving in the senate it was very hard for me being very interested in the programs that we were developing to suddenly have to start tearing them down because we simply didn't have the funds to provide for them. I mean that was a very difficult time for government. Then consider that when the first dollars came through with economic expansion and development which followed that very difficult time that the governor put additional money into education. He went beyond the provisions of [Proposition] 98 and saw to it that schools had the advantage of receiving funds made available through increased economic activity and of course I think that was the beginning of the reform effort. But like so many administrations he probably won't get the credit because a lot of it doesn't manifest. In fact it's going to take a number of years before we really see the results of what has occurred because of such things as class size reductions and higher academic standards and new textbooks and materials and better provision for teacher training and for staff development and developing

the cadre of teachers that we need to really bring what we need the professional influence in the classroom

YATES Now explain to me again you're an adviser you're spokesperson for the Wilson administration in education and you're working on as you mentioned these different issues that were going on Or more than issues—they were implemented like class size reduction Now explain your role in connection to these other entities In working for example with the legislature or working with the Department of Education or the Board of Education Do I understand this right? Am I

BERGESON Yes actually the work was more with the Board of Education and of course they were going through the process of developing the academic standards going through the Academic Content Standards Commission working with the board and the commission We provided a liaison through the governor's office to make certain that these were in accordance with the governor's educational policy The strategies that would bring about those results Working with the legislature by actually sponsoring the bills or working with the governor to find authors to carry out those bills We also presented budget recommendations working with and approved by the Department of Finance and the governor that would then become the education budget that would go through the budget process And then also the accompanying legislative directives that would

need to spell out how these programs would be conducted the policy directives that would be needed Find authors for those meet with the authors staff sit down with them and then work with the legislative staffers in the governor's office who would then direct from a legislative perspective as well So the coordination was there We had a very strong working relationship that we had primarily fostered through I thought an excellent system Not only the strategy but the individuals involved were knowledgeable very capable in understanding education issues

YATES You mean out of all these entities?

BERGESON Right His legislative staff within his administration were In fact some of them were my former chiefs of staff Two of them were

YATES Oh you mentioned one I remember

BERGESON Yeah it was [Christopher] Chris [W] Kahn and Kevin Sloat and both of them went to work with the governor as legislative secretaries And those responsibilities of course were to help to refine and to again work with the legislature on legislation that the governor sponsored But I mean we worked along with them and assisted in evaluating bills sending recommendations to the governor as far as support or non support So it became a very important role as far as the total overall process Looking at the bills as they would come in As you know thousands of bills are introduced in the legislature

YATES Right

BERGESON A large portion of them of course were dealing with education because of the focus on education But being able to determine whether these bills were in accordance with the governor's policy? Are they funded? Is the funding there? You know looking at the whole intricate and complex education area

YATES Well I imagine your experience then at all these different levels the local level and then at the legislative level obviously would be helpful in this?

BERGESON Well that was helpful but also in getting the right staff there to get the assistance because it's a massive obligation a lot of technical know how particularly in reading legislation being able to understand how you know when you cross reference and that sort of thing To be able to determine exactly what that bill really means and what is it going to do as far as implementation

YATES I know we're kind of going through it kind of quickly I'm sure there's much more we could talk about but now of course the election comes up and Gray Davis is elected governor but then also you're appointed to the State Board of Education And I don't know the timing Maybe you could explain the timing of all that

BERGESON Well at the time that I was appointed which I think was in September of 1998

YATES Yeah I know that you went on the board in '98 but I didn't know

BERGESON I didn't actually participate because as soon as the election was over it was felt that there would be an entirely new board so my feeling was that there was very little chance that I would be

YATES And that's because you had a governor from a different party?

BERGESON Right And so you know it's normal And I hadn't been confirmed Now if I had just been confirmed then you have another As it was I was filling out an unexpired term

YATES Oh I see

BERGESON So I only had until 2001 even if I had been confirmed So that was kind of the feeling but I mean I sort of felt like this was kind of a done deal and that there are two really high profile well three really high profile boards or commissions There's the Transportation Commission the Board of Regents [of the University of California] and the State Board of Education other than those appointed positions like directors and cabinet members and so forth But generally those are where you reward the people that have worked with you and you know you like to show your gratitude by giving them an appointment So there was very little hope that I would ever have an appointment as a Davis appointee There had actually been a discussion with the governors prior to Wilson leaving in that there was somewhat of an understanding that if then to be Governor

Davis would have the opportunity to appoint the Prop[osition] 10¹ commission then Governor Wilson could have some say as far as who remained on as far as two appointments the board of regents and the State Board of Education That's why I'm there

YATES OK Now Prop 10 what's Remind me

BERGESON Prop 10 was the tobacco funds used for child development programs

YATES Oh right Right

BERGESON And it was Rob Reiner's program and

YATES Right now it's coming back to me

BERGESON those appointments which had not been clearly spelled out to the new governor were to be made by the governor at the time of the election which meant that Wilson actually controlled the appointments to that And I think there had been a misunderstanding as far as who had the authority to appoint and so there was a little I hate to say horse trading But I mean there was an agreement made then that I would stay on the [California State] Board [of Education] and fill out that term

YATES So this happened in September? Or this is going on

BERGESON This happened just around December as a matter of fact

YATES Oh OK So your name

BERGESON Because I had figured that you know I was pretty well through I hadn't

¹ Proposition 10 (November 1998) early childhood development programs additional tobacco surtax

even considered that I would be remaining on the board and then I find that yeah I probably have a good shot at it and I know I did talk to the new governor not before he was governor but before he was actually sworn in indicating that he would like to keep me on the board and felt You know we talked about the issues and accountability because that was my concern That was the one issue that had not been addressed properly by the former legislature The governor had to veto an accountability bill simply because it was a non accountability bill It was a bill called accountability but there was no accountability in it And in order to get a decent bill you had to get the Democrat legislators to go along with it and so that was one of the issues that the new governor was going to be very much involved with which made me comfortable because I felt that that was going to be one of the concerns We needed that continuity and that was the one part of the three legged stool that was missing we had the standards we had the assessment but we didn't have the accountability

YATES OK and so this is the part you were talking about that Wilson wasn't able to

BERGESON Yeah right

YATES to place into effect or whatever the right terminology is OK

BERGESON That pretty well firmed up my interest in remaining and making certain

YATES That you saw that Gray Davis was interested in pursuing that? OK

BERGESON And to maintain the direction that Wilson had initiated with high standards Not to back in for another flavor of the month like a lot of people feel in education that we're just moving around a lot But it would really build the stability that we needed You have a strong sense that standards are going to be utilized that the curriculum framework is going to be developed in accordance with those standards that teachers are going to be trained to be able to teach to those standards

YATES So when you went on the board then what was the composition of the board in terms of Wilson versus Davis appointees?

BERGESON Well at that time of course they were all Wilson appointees until their terms expired

YATES Oh right OK

BERGESON Or their nominations were withdrawn And they did that for I think I'm trying to remember exactly I remember [Timothy C] Tim Draper's nomination was pulled and

YATES Is this the person who's carrying the voucher initiative?

BERGESON Yeah yeah He's the one that now has Prop[osition] 38¹ I believe it is And then let's see there were others that were to be reappointed who were not Marina Tse was one Gertie Thomas was one and the ones that remained on until their terms actually expired Yvonne [W] Larson her

1 Proposition 38 (November 2000) school vouchers state funded private and religious education public school funding

term expired [Robert L.] Bob Trigg his term He was a Democrat and we were hoping that he might be reappointed but he wasn't He was president of the board following Yvonne Larson And let's see who else? Oh Janet Nicholas her term was not I mean she was not reappointed I don't think she requested it But the only holdovers now would be Marion Joseph I think her term is up in 2002 And then [Kathryn] Kathy Dronenburg and myself who are currently the only Republicans Unfortunately Kathy has been very ill She has had cancer and has not been able to attend many of the meetings of late But her term expires at the end of this year as does mine

YATES So from what you're saying it sounds like at least when Davis first came into office then the composition was

[End Tape 9 Side A]

[Begin Tape 9 Side B]

BERGESON Changed dramatically Yeah currently there are three of us of the Wilson board and at the end of this year there will only be one Two of us will have filled our term and Marion Joseph will be the only carryover

YATES Now maybe this is a good point to spend a few minutes talking about the structure of these different entities or how they all work together? And you did touch on that just a little bit when we were talking about becoming secretary of child development and education and how these

all You know which is statutory? Who has what authority? But maybe you could talk a little bit about that and how effective it is or ineffective

BERGESON California is one of seven states who currently maintain a superintendent of public instruction. I don't think there is any state that requires or has the responsibility for education as strongly as California does. In other words, we have more students, we have a full time legislature which keeps us busy because we have thousands of bills that are introduced and those bills have to be dealt with every year. Some states have a two year session and budget so they're not pushed into the crisis orientation towards getting bills through the legislature and signed or vetoed by the governor.

And problems exist primarily in California because of the lack of definition of authority as far as the superintendent of public instruction, the State Board of Education, and the governor. And many feel, as I do, that the governor is the one who should be establishing the policy. His or her administration is going to be accountable. The public wants to know what their administration has produced. And in the case of education, it's very high profile at the present time. And the governor needs to have every advantage to be able to make the system work. It is necessary to have a State Board of Education appointed by the governor that is in sync with the governor in being able to advance policy, as well as oversee the

Department of Education in a way that implementing regulations are in accordance with the intent of the legislature. The state board actually has the overall authority.

YATES: Right. To set state policy, right?

BERGESON: Right. And the office of the superintendent, other than being the bully pulpit for education, can advance proposals, can lobby the legislature but has no real authority. Ultimately, the governor will make the decisions. The governor develops the budget. The legislature develops the legislation that has to meet the needs or the requirements of whatever funds are going to be provided, whether sufficient revenues are going to be provided. And so you have that bifurcation of effort where everyone should be looking at the same agenda, should be working together, and in a sense, the superintendent of public instruction is sort of out there without really having a foundation to build upon where authority can be manifest. Obviously, through influence, yes, but not direct impact on the policy that the state board has. And, as I say, oversight of the department is a major role for the superintendent but that oftentimes is not a role that superintendents are focused on. An elected superintendent. They much prefer the political exposure, the ability to be able to drum up support for education, in other words, a bully pulpit. And that obviously is a very important function, and it's constitutionally required. I think that were it

not we would definitely find a change in the way California's educational governance system works or doesn't work

YATES Well let me ask you then on the time that you have been on the Board of Education what has been the focus of the board basically?

BERGESON Well implementing the academic standards getting the standards identified in a way that the framework the responsibility for adopting curriculum Making certain that that framework is aligned with the standards and then the all important assessment tools be effectively designed And we've been working It's been a very very busy time for the board with a tremendous responsibility for major reform efforts And that assessment is key trying to get a reliable verifiable test that the public has confidence in that it's a true measurement of students progress Then again the high school exit exam is another effort in finding a way of determining if students have the skills and content knowledge in order to receive a diploma So the diploma means that the student has indeed achieved certain required knowledge and skills

YATES Now how well has the board been able to work with Governor Davis?

BERGESON I think that the board has worked well with the governor I have not had the direct contact that I had with Wilson obviously but I think that there's so much interest on the part of this governor to stay focused on education that I think through his secretary of education And of course this is

the third secretary of education they've had now

YATES Well you anticipated My next question is what happened to that position? There's an interim or an acting person right now

BERGESON Well former senator Gary Hart was the first and I have great respect for Gary I worked with him when I was in the senate and I think he's solid on education and really I think he was an excellent choice He decided to change his career He's back at Cal[ifornia] State University

YATES Right He's at Sac State [California State University Sacramento] isn't he?

BERGESON And I think and according to conversations that we had he really likes to teach I mean he would be a fabulous teacher We need more like him When he resigned then [Susan K.] Sue Burr who was his undersecretary took over that role And again she's a great technician great experience She was his assistant when Gary was with Cal State University policy development and that was prior to the time that he was actually appointed secretary So I mean she was very knowledgeable and then she was offered a position with [Elk] Grove [Unified School District] I believe as an assistant superintendent in charge of business services or something like that And when she resigned then the next appointee was John Mockler who was the State Board of Education's executive director Real loss for us because he probably

YATES Oh right that was just in the paper wasn't it? Right That's right

BERGESON Yeah and he was just recently appointed as But I think the linkage will be there He obviously still has good contact with the board members and you know can continue the focus working directly with the governor He has great rapport with the governor and I think the governor has a great deal of respect for his expertise In fact it goes back as far as Wilson Riles when he was working as superintendent of public instruction He was his finance director He and Marion Joseph worked together way back That's when I met both of them together But he probably understands school finance better than anyone else in the state He wrote Prop 98 I think a good deal of it So I mean you couldn't have a greater expertise in a position than John Mockler brings both to the governor's office as well as Hopefully will continue that liaison with the state board I understand he's an interim and that the governor will be replacing him with a full time nominee or candidate after that

YATES How has this turnover impacted the board if at all?

BERGESON We haven't really seen too much of it because our direction's been pretty well clarified And we have been very familiar with the governor's direction what he wanted to have done And of course the exit exam is his program and so we want to make it as good as it can be And a lot of other states have had a good deal of difficulty with the exit exam I think

one of the reports said that we should delay a year. I think the board's taking a position that delaying it is perhaps deferring a concept that we think people should adhere to, and that is that we want to make certain that these students do have that expertise in order to get a diploma. So it may require some transitioning, ratcheting up performance levels, you know, giving students more time to become familiar with the new standards. But at any rate it's an issue that we're taking very seriously.

We have subcommittees that work on this and other issues, and each of us serve as a liaison. I serve as liaison to the [Science] Framework Development and also the [Assessment/]Accountability [Subject Matter] subcommittees as I do to the [California Commission on Teacher] Credentialing Commission and chair the Legislative Subcommittee. We all have assigned roles that are beyond just attending board meetings. It's a very difficult job and a lot of responsibility.

YATES: You mentioned all these various aspects that you're working on. What do you think has been the most contentious issue for the board to deal with?

BERGESON: Within the academic community you have very strong philosophical differences. When we developed the English language or language arts standards, we got into a great deal of difficulty over whole language versus phonics. Then we got into math, and there's a constructivist math which is more cooperative, planning, working together type of math, as

opposed to strict fundamental approach where you do have a lot of drill work. I think ultimately you realize you need for a very firm foundation of skills and understanding of both reading and math then build on that. And of course there is a need to train teachers in a way where they can adapt methodology that can be effective with kids. But you need a clear cut and a very deep understanding of what those standards are so that they know they will be accountable for kids learning those standards and then develop strategies and methodologies or the pedagogy that is going to best work with all groups of kids or individuals.

YATES But those particular things are the kinds of things that you as a board sit and try to grapple with?

BERGESON Right and we have a lot of discussion about this. The English language learners has been a very contentious issue because of the changes that have occurred between bilingual education and then eliminating bilingual education per se but providing for other kinds of developmental educational sequence for English language learners. Again very contentious because there are the holdouts who feel that in some way bilingual education is going to prevail regardless. It's really a matter of how do you provide the best environment for kids to learn? And obviously you want kids that are non English learning to speak English and I think it would be a good idea if kids could learn other languages as

well I think language acquisition is going to be very helpful particularly as we move into more global aspects our economy travel a lot of things that we do

YATES Well we're a society now that deals with different languages

BERGESON Language acquisition—it's very important Dual immersion programs are very exciting because In fact some schools in Texas require that all English speaking kids have to learn Spanish and all Spanish language have to learn English and other languages They actually have magnet schools where kids are learning Russian and other languages in elementary school which And we're doing some of that now We have programs In fact one of the things that I worked on in the secretary's office was a program to teach Japanese to bring teachers over here from Japan who can actually work with training programs to teach our teachers Japanese to be able to provide those programs in elementary schools

YATES Well let me shift here again and ask you a few questions that sort of tie back into the legislative period of your life One that I didn't ask you about was the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] investigation and its subsequent raid which occurred in the late eighties And I wanted to get your take in terms of just your observations of what happened and why you think it happened?

BERGESON Well I think everybody tends to become loose about anything that you feel is very important and you realize that you have to do things in a way to be able to get what you want done In this case of course a lot of it was fund raising because fund raising is very much a part of survival for legislators and for party control And I think there were always explicit directives that went out—what you could and couldn't do—and I think frankly some stepped over the line And the question was you know how it developed And I think when they did the raid on the You know it certainly sent up red flags that probably But I don't think that it was very surprising because knowing that You know sort of a well everybody's doing it type of attitude I remember the first thing they tell you when you take office is never trade a vote And it's very much an admonition that this is something that is just absolutely verboten And I guess the way you interpret trading a vote became somewhat fuzzy to some folks I mean lives were changed and people were crushed I mean you know there were some disastrous results I think in some cases some very bad judgment was used and you know it was a tough price to have to pay

YATES What do you think the impact was on the activities and the mood of the legislature?

BERGESON It was sobering I think it was very sobering Of course everybody's

looking for the wires [Laughter] You never know when you're But
 no it was very sobering particularly when the convictions came down
 because everybody started to analyze And I think that it probably had an
 effect on everyone to kind of shape up your act You know this is not
 anything that can be tolerated And so I think Unfortunately though
 people forget and one of the things with term limits is that you come up
 without having had the experience or the background of understanding
 that there are rules you have to play by and sometimes

YATES Do people have to be taught these rules? I mean

BERGESON Well you know after that of course we were required to participate in
 ethics training Every year we had ethics training and you get into

YATES So that started after this?

BERGESON That's one of those things that was a spin off Also I served on the senate
 Ethics Committee which was a committee that was organized to oversee
 the role of the legislators themselves you know as far as what
 Because you get into such issues as what is ethical and what is illegal
 And so they would test us—testing being we would simulate instances and
 you would then be required to make a judgment You know you kind of
 test yourself as to what you would Where are your limits in other
 words I think that it was effective A lot of legislators felt Pooh pooh
 We don't need this and they're probably the ones that need it the most

But on the other hand I think that there was a new awareness in the legislature certainly When you see some of your colleagues you know that are literally hauled off to prison it was a There was a definite change in the behavior of legislators

YATES Another broad question or topic which is I wanted to have you compare and contrast leadership of both the assembly and the senate So first maybe you could compare and contrast the leadership styles of Leo McCarthy and then Willie Brown?

BERGESON [Laughter] Contrast for sure Leo McCarthy was a very In fact I ran against him for lieutenant governor

YATES Oh right Sure Of course

BERGESON and he actually asked me to come and swear him in which shows you know I mean he is just a very very decent a very moral person and very ethical I had a great deal of respect for Leo as a person He was just a good person And he had enough Machiavellian spirit where Obviously you know he had to in order to be able to get to the position where he was But he always had his rump caucus which were the Bermanites which were constantly plotting to replace him with Howard Berman And it got into this sort of internal warfare There's always a rump caucus and that's one thing I found out If you don't vote for the one who becomes the leader then you become part of another group because

you'll never be recognized by that leader for any perks. So the only way you could get your perks—perks being committee assignments or chairmanships—you have to vote for somebody that's going to get into that position. So you're constantly trying. I mean, that's just

YATES Right, you did talk about your own problems with the Republican Caucus.

BERGESON Right. When you're in purgatory. You're constantly wondering how you're going to be able to get out, so you want to make sure the next time around you're going to vote for the right person. But I mean, those things persist in all of the caucuses and I think with the battle between Berman and McCarthy, which erupted full scale into all the primary elections because then those forces going out into the precincts and getting the candidates that are going to support one or the other. As it was, Howard Berman won and. Of course, Howard was considered much more of a political strategist and perhaps one that would be tougher to deal with, and that's when the Republicans cut a deal to have Willie Brown elected speaker of the assembly. Because they felt that they could work with Willie. And one of the reasons that I did not support Willie at that time was that they said he will help us with reapportionment. [Laughter] I mean, that didn't make a lot of sense. The first thing Willie Brown would do was to solidify his caucus and get forty-one votes and then he would have to show that he was fully supportive of getting them reelected. And

that means you're not going to help the Republicans during reapportionment you know? Well that was just foolish to think that he would be supportive in any way which is exactly what happened

But I mean Willie was a good leader because he could exercise power and I think a leader has to be able to discipline and to reward And that means that you've got to work with the Republican leader because you've got to give them enough authority and enough ability to be able to reward and to punish on their own so that you can build direction and structure And that's where the assembly has had the greatest difficulty since Willie left is that there has been no one really in charge and because of term limits they're constantly going through a new regime And so where Willie was a masterful politician But I mean he was much more of a consensus builder than most people think And he could punish As I say with my confirmation it was very clear But I mean the direction was there and he achieved his results and he could do that

YATES Right

BERGESON He can drive the results and he will get enough of the opposition party to buy in where he can be successful And the house doesn't break down as a result of that I mean you may not always like those results but you have a greater play within that than you do where there is no leadership and then you just don't have any game plan and then consequently

ultimately the governor and the "big five" make the decisions the legislature becomes irrelevant

YATES Well I know one reason I always ask this question about looking at their strengths and weaknesses is that I think the public we get one perception through the media particularly about the negatives or the pluses And you know of course Willie Brown was a leader for so long and there's a lot of strong feelings about him and so I think it's always interesting to find out how you perceived his abilities in your actual working with him or seeing him work in the legislature which is sometimes not exactly what you get in the media

BERGESON Yeah Well I had my differences with Willie Brown We had very strong differences and yet I think I had a deep respect for his ability to get things done I mean he was able to be very supportive of some of the issues that I involved myself with One was and I think I mentioned it earlier the effort that I had in a bill to combat the tobacco interests for sampling for Well he had been caught back in Washington [D C] doing some finagling with Philip Morris to try to cut a deal I probably shouldn't mention names because I'm not certain who was there But it had involved efforts to get preemptive legislation that he had made an agreement with Well someone found the information and [put it] in front of Willie Well he suddenly became very receptive to working with

the Women's Legislative Caucus. And so we met with him and finally with his help we were able to actually accomplish that. Other issues where you can form a bipartisan effort, he was very helpful in getting the votes for us and getting it through the legislature.

YATES: When you say "us," you mean the Women's Caucus?

BERGESON: Yeah, with the Women's Caucus, or even in some cases with issues that were important to Republicans where he had some interest. He was very much influenced by his friends, his interests groups, trial lawyers. You know, he was very, very strong with their interests and issues.

YATES: So sometimes that went beyond the Democratic platform.

BERGESON: Right. But where there were issues that. And he was very effective. And of course, getting a budget. No one could get a budget better than Willie because he knew how to please people and he knew how to punish if there was. And a lot of his tactics have been used since then.

Jesse Unruh established a great legacy of how to make the system work. And I think Jesse was somewhat similar to Willie in that he had great political savvy, but I mean, he could get things done because he knew how to use the system. Sometimes you were disadvantaged by it, but at least there was leadership and so there was direction. And that I think is important and Willie picked up a lot from Jesse Unruh and his style of leadership. I mean, if he says no, he means no, but you have to

listen to what he says And sometimes he gives dual messages but if you
 listen to what he says And he's pretty straightforward I mean he
 doesn't mince words and he'll tell you This ain't going nowhere
 [Laughter] "You know it ain't going nowhere "

YATES Let me ask you some questions then about the senate leadership And of
 course I know for most of the time you were there it was David Roberti
 and then I can't remember I forgot to check the dates for when Bill
 Lockyer came in

BERGESON Well when I was in the assembly [James R] Jim Mills was actually
 the

YATES Right right

BERGESON And Jim of course was the guy you know He loved everybody and
 everybody loved him and there was very little partisanship David
 Roberti threw him out to be more partisan and it became much more
 partisan and Because I had worked with both during the time I
 was fortunate enough to get my bills out of the assembly over to the
 senate And then of course with David I had a very very
 strong and very positive relationship with David Roberti and I think he
 was very very helpful to me I mean he secured my position as chair of
 the committee for Local Government and whenever I had an issue that
 was important to me He gave me the vote on a beach liability bill

This caused Bill Lockyer to resign—temporarily—from chairmanship of the committee because he was unhappy that David Roberti had given me a vote on a bill that had to do with beach liability. And it's one that had been very important to beach communities which also affected David's district which is part of Los Angeles. And it's where you would have surf related injuries and because you had lifeguards which constituted an improved condition cities would be held liable for accidents occurring in the ocean regardless of whether they would dive into a sandbar or whatever this was the responsibility of the city. And \$6 and \$7 million dollar judgments were being handed down. And of course it was very threatening to local governments. And so David assisted me on that one. And I felt he was very fair during reapportionment. I mean he was literally the one that lost his district and was defeated and it was primarily because he tried to help everyone with a district that would be compatible both with the party as well as the constituencies for them. But you know I think that. Then Bill Lockyer of course who was different. But it was a peaceful takeover. I mean it was not a war like we had with Berman and McCarthy.

YATES Well Roberti had to leave because of term limits

BERGESON And so they kind of handed it over. And Bill I had known real well too and always had gotten along well. And I always found him very

reasonable I never felt like he was There was not the feeling that existed within the assembly because the senate really was and is a much more independent body There were certain rules and regulations you had to follow and if you were in leadership you had to vote for the budget And to some extent they do that in the assembly but occasionally you have a renegade that They want a perfect record so they've never voted for a budget I don't know how you think you can run a district or a state or whatever without a budget but there's some that will never vote for budget because there's something in there they don't like But I think that other than that and where certain issues come before You know where it's a house rule that you adhere to that But when it comes to policy issues there's no Either you vote for this or you lose your chairmanship or 'I'm mad at you It's a much more Now I don't know how things are now because you have a lot of the assembly people who have moved into the senate But it was a much more collegial house People have their differences and they can argue vociferously on the floor and walk off into the lounge and pat each other on the back and say You know that was a great debate and shake hands and there's an understanding that we all have a role to play and it's to represent people and sometimes those are good to bring about divergent opinions and positions

YATES I am interested in one comment you made which I've heard other people mention is partisanship becoming much more definite You mentioned a connection to Roberti coming into the leadership position versus Jim Mills although it sounds like Roberti obviously was helping Republican senators But why do you think it was becoming more partisan?

BERGESON Well I think it was they needed a change because they felt Oftentimes what happens is you look at what happened during the election The election is the most critical issue both to the party that's in power as well as the party that wants to get in power Because it determines who's going to be either the president pro tem or the speaker of the assembly And so everything kind of manifests itself through the election process Well when you have a real nasty race and particularly where Democrats will put a strong candidate against an incumbent Republican or vice versa—Republicans will put someone against a well respected Democrat—a lot of that residue I mean because campaigns become very very I could say vicious which isn't really an over estimation They really have become so in the last few years And that sort of sets the tone and there's a lot of residue left after that oftentimes

YATES So you think that was happening more in the eighties?

BERGESON It's much more so because you had legislators there for years I mean there was no such thing as turning out an incumbent legislator and yet

some of this started to occur and because of the Then realizing how much power was really manifest within the majority party's ability as interests in California fund raising became more important PAC [political action committee] contribution I mean all these things More expensive elections because of new technology And all of this has generated a greater need for fund raising for more money and then you look to the special interests and you know it just At least my experience when I was first elected though it did have an impact on certain interest groups Republicans would depend on money from some and that's why we could never get people to serve on the Education Committee because CTA always funded legislators who served on that committee and Republicans weren't funded by CTA So I mean we had some of that but not to the intensity it is now and I think primarily because of the high cost of elections And certainly since term limits there's a constant upheaval

YATES Right

BERGESON And you're constantly grappling to see who's going to come out with the most votes and those most votes translate into power

YATES Well let me ask you now a similar question—I asked you about leadership—which is [about] the governors who were in office when you were in the legislature And I'm thinking again compare and contrast but

also in terms of their relationship maybe with the legislature And of course the first one s Jerry Brown and then there s George Deukmejian and then Pete Wilson

BERGESON Well you know Jerry Brown had a very distinctive style and I don t think anybody would question that And he would be hard to judge on the norm because he was not part of what you would consider to be the stereotype governor He did a lot of delegating he delegated a great deal I remember John Vasconcellos did a lot of the negotiating

I remember this was right after Prop 13 and a lot had to be done to look at the whole issue of local state relationships because the one thing that Prop 13 did was to provide far greater authority and power at the state level both with education and local government because then it was decided what funds the state was going to send locally what strings would be attached and so the control factor was very evident And it was kind of a new era I remember when I was elected there were seventeen new Republicans I think it was seventeen And we were called the Prop 13 babies all elected during that time and largely elected under Prop 13 And so here was Jerry Brown who campaigned against Prop 13 and then of course took it to be his issue and literally took credit for Prop 13 So it was a time when we needed a great deal of leadership to really exert this vision of how the state was going to go forward And as it was

transportation It was this era of 'lower your expectations ' I mean that was sort of the theme that was used in trying to justify

YATES I think it was also "small is beautiful "

BERGESON Prop 13 was to lower the expectation for government consequently if you don't have government then you don't build roads you don't build the universities you don't So there was a rather almost draconian cutback in a lot of these areas where Pat Brown of course is still looked upon as the one who has the greatest prominence as far as capital development whether it's dams and roads and

YATES School education higher education

BERGESON water facilities yeah And so it was kind of difficult because I was looking from Orange County's perspective which was in desperate need of funds for highways and we were going through that growth era where Disneyland has suddenly attracted all kinds of development And I remember when we first moved out here why is everybody moving way out to that God forsaken part of southern California ' ? And then of course suddenly everything was filling in

I remember that he had a number of veto overrides which is very unusual I almost got one of my indexing bills veto overridden because he'd made some folks mad on a farm labor issue or something

But at any rate when George Deukmejian was elected I think

everyone expected a more moderate approach because he had been considered a rather moderate senator but he was very tight fisted with the money. However I think he had more to do with the development of the university system than any governor. He did a great job of putting far greater prominence into our university system and he was responsible for a lot of the work that went in to bringing money research grants and a lot of the technology development which fueled much of the Silicon Valley development. And that's when the economy started picking up. And I think he can be given a good deal of credit for what our universities have become foremost in the nation. He was not as generous with K 12 education and I think that we were then trying to bring about an awareness that K 12 education was significant to the future of California's economy.

Of course he focused on what were priority concerns. The big issue then was public safety because we had come out of a time when there was a great deal of crime and people were greatly concerned about public safety. It was the number one issue in the state and I think that he dealt with this issue on a priority basis. So when it came to public safety university systems stimulating the economy I think George Deukmejian deserves a good deal of credit for that. You know he'd sit and look at you with those big brown eyes and he'd say no just as firmly as you could.

imagine if it was an issue that he was not supportive of I had personal admiration for him I mean he was completely honest and ethical and would never fit the stereotype politician He was completely honest in that he truly believed in what he was doing With a wonderful family—his wife Gloria And they provided a wonderful atmosphere in Sacramento in bringing together legislators in a way that was cohesive and yet there were high standards of conduct I mean he always insisted on very high standards both of his staff as well as the people that he came in contact with

And of course Pete Wilson had the worst of all timing for I mean I don't think you could have found a time or a set of circumstances that could be any worse than when Pete Wilson took office And as someone said the state was not governable but he was able to piece together the shambles after we had literally fallen apart economically and put things together against a lot of opposition He was referred to as being mean spirited but from a personal perspective my working relations were anything but mean spirited He was very sensitive and had a great deal more empathy for many of the problems than he's ever given credit for I think the mean spirited attitude was created probably because of some of the tough issues he took on and perhaps from a diplomatic point of view they could have been handled better

YATES You're talking about like Prop 187

BERGESON One eighty seven and [Proposition] 209¹ But here you're finding more and more Even our new vice presidential candidate as far as affirmative action questioned whether it's right to discriminate with one group against another and that it You know it's better done through access and opportunity and leveling the playing field and giving everybody a good shot at doing things they want to do Because Wilson really most of his efforts were aimed at helping kids who hadn't had advantages And if you look at targeted programs many of them went into remediation after school programs mentoring tutoring programs all of those to try to reinforce And areas to involve more parents charter schools ways of creating greater creativity and generating a greater feeling for the stakeholders who could take credit for seeing good results because of the innovative and creative efforts that they put there And I think as I said that much of the good things that are happening now in education would never have happened had Wilson not done some pretty dramatic things We would never have had class size reduction because the money was provided If you had to phase it in you'd never do it And I think that all of the talking about it for years and years and years If he hadn't made that commitment I don't think we would have enacted it

1 Proposition 209 (November 1996) prohibition against discrimination or preferential treatment by state and other public entities

And I think in the long run when you see the longitudinal research on this we will have achieved greater returns for that investment than perhaps any of the others. But it's taken in the whole. You have to have the teachers, you have to have the facilities, you have to have the ability to get the curriculum and the materials and the environment there and the reinforcement. But you can deliver these programs when you have twenty kids in a classroom. You can't do it when you have thirty kids in a first grade classroom. So I think from the perspective of what we're all trying to achieve, that that perhaps was the real beginning that started everything moving in the right direction.

YATES: Another topic I wanted to ask you about was term limits. Now, you've touched on it in this session several times and you touched on it previously in terms of the impact it had on staff, i.e., losing staff and the effect that had in keeping touch with your constituents. Perhaps you can expand if there's anything else you want to add about the impact of term limits.

BERGESON: Well, there's good and bad. It isn't all bad. I think that sometimes reflecting on the rapid change. But it has, for one thing, brought a lot more women into the system. That probably would never have been. It's brought more minorities. I mean, those that had not had an opportunity because of incumbency being so strong. It has provided greater access to

a more divergent legislature

On the other hand I think that the continuity that's needed to be able to become proficient in policy development is very difficult to do. And I anticipated that staff would perhaps be the continuity provider but that hasn't necessarily happened because a lot of legislators will bring on people that are involved in their campaigns and they may be good at politics but they may not necessarily have the policy understanding that's necessary.

I see a lot of bad legislation because it's not either effectively drafted or carefully thought through. And you keep seeing more and more of the same thing appearing every year because it's the kind of political issue where the thirty second commercial incites a certain reaction or a headline. You find somebody who does something stupid either in business or government so we will have ten bills introduced to make sure that's never going to happen again. So we legislate to the worst of us and we put more and more restrictions on the process simply by trying to cull out the bad people but then consequently you stifle and you regulate to the extent that you rule out a lot of creativity and good things that could be done too.

YATES Well you know one criticism I've heard which is rather ironic is that because as you just mentioned the brevity of time of staff as well as you

don't have long term staff that actually you're more vulnerable to lobbyists because they're around a lot longer. And when I say vulnerable I mean them being the source of information about things.

BERGESON: In fact, they'll write the bills, they monitor them in committee, they have complete control in the legislation, and that's absolutely true. Lobbyists have become much more. Of course, in many cases they're former legislators. They're finding life after the legislature [by going] into lobbying, though there are restrictions for a time period, but I mean that year goes by in a hurry and then they're in a position to be very influential because they are also involved with distributing campaign funds. And that's where special interests indeed have a tremendous amount of influence. Many of the appointments that are made in government positions are directly due to the funds that have been contributed to campaigns. And that, I think, is something that the public has to be constantly on guard because it's very true. Special interests—and by special interests I don't mean seniors or children, I mean those kinds of special interests that are strictly driven by dollars and the interest that accrues back to those in making greater profits or being able to realize some strong material gain in those should become a much more concern to the general public.

[End Tape 9 Side B]

[Begin Tape 10 Side A]

YATES The whole issue about lobbyists seems to defeat the purpose I think of what the public thought they were maybe accomplishing. Or it's one aspect.

BERGESON Well, as I indicated, I do think that lobbyists and fund raising do far more now to create the environment for policy development than long term legislators and their staff who had the ability to be able to better understand and to develop on a long term basis sound policy.

YATES Another topic I wanted to ask you about is the Republican party in California. And again, this is sort of a broad question, but from your experience and what you've observed, how do you think party politics in California have changed? I'm thinking local organization, grass roots efforts, whatever you want to focus on.

BERGESON Well, you know, when I first became involved and because I can kind of look back—I have a number of years to be able to reflect on—but so much of political campaigns were primarily done with the precinct workers with people that were out in the grass roots [doing] door to door precinct work. Not nearly as expensive as it is now for running a campaign. We didn't have the electronic media. We didn't have the ability to do what they do now, so I think the era of technology has probably done more to affect political campaigns and the parties. And the reason it gravitates to

parties is because it involves the money to run a campaign and where it becomes necessary for parties to raise money again you're getting back to who's going to control the legislature who's going to control the governor's office and the long term impact of who's going to be in control for reapportionment I mean all these issues become survival interests for the party and that all takes money You can't do it now without money because you've got to be able to for one thing pay a lot of the people that are now working in precincts Women were not working at the time when I first started and they were the backbone of volunteerism particularly for Republicans during that time And since that time many women are now working A lot of the older folks that did it simply are too old now to be able to do a lot of the work that's necessary It's very demanding And to try to tap into new areas of the work force say to do the precinct work is extremely difficult In many cases you actually have to pay people to come in man the phone banks and things of that type So I think it depends on the amount of money that's necessary to raise to finance a campaign the technology that's needed the mailings that are needed And of course now we have the Internet it's a whole new dimension How you get your issues to the public And maybe it personalizes and maybe the Internet is one of the good things because if you can get immediate feedback sometimes that helps But by the same token you

can take a poll in an hour's time and tell what the public attitude is and then all of a sudden your politician says exactly what your poll is going to reflect which isn't too different from the way it's always been done except you have immediate feedback so you can appear much better informed politically correct

But I think the high cost of campaigns is really what has driven more of the partisanship which then affects the legislation In order to gain the funds that are necessary you've got to be able to cater to the interests that are going to provide the money So I think that in a sense this has impacted partisanship as well as the people that the party seeks to run for those offices because they look at polls They're looking from Sacramento or Washington who is best suited for our needs rather than who is best suited for the community's needs And I think sometimes you build some resistance to candidate development and who's going to be funded and who's not going to be funded Who's going to be advanced to ultimately be successful in an election

YATES Well a subset of that I wanted to ask you about is the appeal for women in the Republican party in terms of being candidates And I think as you pointed out earlier there haven't been all that many Republican women office holders in legislature—I'm just talking about California right now And maybe you could talk about why you think that is

BERGESON Well generally the party folks I mean whether it's the senate caucus or the assembly caucus or the county committees or whatever the ones they recruit are generally the ones that are going to be elected into office Women haven't been recruited and I think it's partly because women haven't advanced themselves They haven't really seen themselves as candidates I think now it's becoming a very different arena but I mean in the past that's been very much the case that Republican women sometimes have felt their role is to get Republican men elected And then surveys have also shown that oftentimes Republican women don't necessarily support Republican women and so it's a question of

YATES Why is that?

BERGESON Well I don't know whether it's a hangover or whatever from But it's changing This is what has been advanced as the rationale Not necessarily do I believe that but I mean these

YATES You mean that the role of the woman is not to be a candidate?

BERGESON Yeah Well that they should be home with their family

YATES Yeah OK That's what I meant OK

BERGESON For example when I was running they said You know if you have young kids you should never put young kids pictures on your brochure " Of course I didn't have any young kids because I had pretty much raised my family when I ran for state office But I mean candidates were

actually admonished not to use family pictures where you have young children because the attitude is that you should be home with your family. You shouldn't be doing

YATES But now is that true for men too?

BERGESON No! [Laughter] No, there was definitely a double standard for that and those were things that used to bother me somewhat. I've always felt that you can. And family's important. It's very important to me. I mean, I was glad that I was able to spend a lot of time with my family, but I think that's the decision that you can make. You can still be a good parent and still have other interests. I mean, I've always had other interests. Mine happened to be more local than they were state when my children were young.

But the other thought, of course, was that if women don't see themselves in that position, they're not going to be assertive enough to get into that position. And I don't know. I look back and I think, I don't know how come I ever got where I got, frankly, because I just always thought I could do it, but I never felt like I had to get out and fight for it, because I'd always had a lot of support from my male colleagues. The timing was such that they needed somebody and I happened to be there, you know?

When I was serving in the senate, I used to raise a little Cain

because when they would bring the candidates that they wanted to support Where are the women? Can't you find any women candidates? We have city council we have business people now women that are very successful in business and local government And again I think that's changing but in Orange County I've been very concerned because you have two or three party leaders who advance their candidates and they haven't been women or if a woman appeared they would suddenly talk them out of it because Well you don't have the money to run " or "You can't win You're going to split the vote and we're going to get such and such elected And that I think is disconcerting because we have now so many women that have been successful mayors They've been very successful in business CEOs of large companies but I think our field is going to become much broader

I think the issues have been raised substantially where now I think they're going bend over backwards to be able to show At the Republican National Convention everything is concentrating on outreach and to show inclusiveness and everything that we can do to show that our party is very appropriate for upward mobility for minorities for women for whoever wants to take advantage of the benefits of a society that has open access with educational opportunity and motivation towards an entrepreneurial society where everybody can be a participant And I think

that's the message and I don't anticipate that we're going to see neglect in the future but some of us will be around to sort of assure them that it's not going to happen

YATES Well it seems like it's taken a long time

BERGESON It's taken too long

YATES because obviously the role of women has changed dramatically since when you first ran I'm thinking for the school board in the sixties There are a lot of women who I guess would consider themselves Republicans They're registered Republicans and own businesses just like you're saying so I find it interesting that there still seems to be a problem in terms of actually getting them involved in politics

BERGESON I think that those problems are being diminished if not eliminated I think probably not as far back as we'd like to think but I think there's a growing awareness within the Republican party that we do have In fact a lot of women that I've known have been extremely successful I don't know whether you had an opportunity to watch but a person like Condi Rice Condoleezza Rice who was the provost for Stanford [University] I mean she could be head and shoulders above most of the male candidates who'd be looking at similar positions I often wonder why she didn't run for U S Senate you know? She has such strong credentials And we're developing a bench now that I think is going to pay off in dividends for

the future. In fact, I think we have a better chance of getting a Republican president, a female president elected now with what's been happening as of late. But it's just that, you know, it was a hard ceiling to crack and once you've done it, the way is clear.

YATES: How do you think California compares to other states in terms of

BERGESON: Republicans?

YATES: women's activism?

BERGESON: Well, I think the women—of course, there's been Democrats—women have been primarily the ones. I mean, they've increased their numbers many, many fold, while the Republicans have gone down as far as numbers in the state legislature and Congress.

YATES: So when you say, "You're talking really in general? Not just California but anywhere?"

BERGESON: Yeah.

YATES: OK.

BERGESON: No, I think that overall women have made a substantial improvement. I mean, it's, "You look at a lot of your successful CEOs, you know? And for a long time we didn't have women with Fortune 500 companies. We don't have the same. But I mean, I think once it starts breaking open, then I think you send messages. I mean, these women that I meet, a lot of these young women are dynamic. I mean, I just think, 'Gosh,' you know?"

And the opportunities they have before them is really You know it's kind of exciting Well it's very exciting And I'd like to have been starting out in the same However I don't know Everything is timing and I feel very fortunate that I had the opportunities that I did because to me it's been very satisfying But I just think that it's a wonderful time for young people to really feel What we need to do is to get them more energized and active in politics because people are turned off politics and a lot of it rightly so because the people that are our representatives have not been the type that have really laid that feeling of trust and responsibility that I think you expect of people that are representing your interests

YATES Now I know that there are these two groups Seneca [Network] [is one] which you've been involved in And I can't remember Did you help found that?

BERGESON Yeah I was one of the founding members and then

YATES And then there's this women's leadership council

BERGESON Yeah that's down in south county which is primarily an Orange County group

YATES OK so is that called women's leadership council of south Orange County or is it

BERGESON Well it's a bit What is it? Conservative Women's [Leadership

Association of South Orange County] It's even bipartisan. It isn't even

YATES Oh OK

BERGESON But it's primarily Republicans

YATES So talk about Seneca

BERGESON Well Seneca was started with the idea of providing financial support for women. It's bundling; it's similar to EMILY's List. I don't think it's been as successful as it can be. It needs to have a greater commitment of resources because you have to be able to contribute much more in the way of sizable funding to candidates. But I think it does. It has demonstrated interest in showing that there is a support group for women candidates and encourages recruitment as well. And I think along with this we've got to do more in candidate schools, really laying out the political realities of what it is to run for office and give that kind of support, you know, so that you're not totally green moving into a highly charged atmosphere when you get into a political campaign. Actually, I think one of the better ways to get women elected is to provide good management services for them because the way you conduct your campaign, the management that you have, the advice that you get is the key to whether you're going to get elected or not.

YATES And what about the other group?

BERGESON Well they're women that are primarily very active in city councils. Many of them helped form their cities. I mean they were the original engineers of what the city should be, forming cityhood, going through the process of incorporation, and then actually getting elected to the council. Many of them have been mayors. In fact, I think you probably would find that most of the mayors in south county have been women. And with that, of course, they bring a lot of political know-how, but they also have good policy experience and are in a great position to continue on in other offices. And it's an encouragement for them to become involved in building a support group. In fact, a lot of the male candidates are very much soliciting their support. They attend meetings and when the campaign gets into high gear and they offer support in exchange for the support of their candidacy. They have tremendous turnout and a lot of attention given to voter registration, but it's primarily to foster an interest with women to really gain a political understanding and give political confidence to future candidates.

YATES How long has that group been together?

BERGESON Probably five or six years.

YATES OK. So it's fairly recent?

BERGESON Yeah.

YATES OK. Well, at this point I wanted to ask you a few summary questions.

focusing on your tenure in the legislature We always like to ask these sort of overarching questions One is what do you feel is the most satisfying aspect about serving in the assembly and the senate?

BERGESON Probably in the assembly the only thing that I can really feel was getting my first bill through [Laughter] the income indexing bill because that was a major accomplishment It's a commitment I made during my campaign and as a freshman legislator particularly one in the minority party I think that was probably my most satisfying experience I don't have a lot of really fond memories [Laughter] of the assembly

YATES Well maybe you can focus on the senate?

BERGESON Yeah the senate I do I have a tremendous appreciation for having served and I think just the fact I may be repeating this but presiding over the senate during Women's History Month and realizing what an awesome experience—to think of the role that the state legislature has and I've always felt the capitol has such significance as an institution that to have that experience was just overwhelming to me And knowing then that I was I think at that point I was the first Republican woman senator to ever have had that experience Becky Morgan left early so she was there a much shorter period of time than I was But I think in being able to serve And then the strategy of being able to plot a bill and get it through committees and the fun of having accomplished getting a bill to the

governor's office and having him sign it from inception to the time that you develop the support and kind of contact with legislators. And I always enjoyed working with the legislators in a way that I still miss a lot of the strong relationships that we developed. But I think it's just a general feeling that it was satisfying. Every day I loved to go to work. I never went to work begrudgingly and I would never leave the capitol till late at night. I'd run across the street sometimes for a couple of receptions and then come back and work at the capitol. And so I never really felt that it was work because I. You know, you just feel like every minute there's something to do. You have the ups and the downs. You know, one day you can be in the depth of despair and things could just be falling apart all around you and the next day you're back up on top. So it was a real roller coaster in emotional experiences as well, but it was always exciting.

YATES Well, I was going to ask you sort of the opposite, which is, there anything that you disliked about serving in legislature?

BERGESON My confirmations. [Laughter]

YATES OK. That seems reasonable.

BERGESON I've had a couple of those but. I mean, you sort of take whatever you have to because you build on that for the good. I mean, some of the things that were difficult, being able to overcome those which gives you a great

feeling you know? If you're not successful on one I never looked at anything as a failure. It was always an experience that you build upon for your next success. The credo I always use: You never judge success or failure on any given day. As you know when you were down that you were going to go up, you knew when you were up you were going to go down. So I mean, it was just this. And you just hope that when the final bell is rung that you have more ups than you do downs and that you're able to accomplish some of the things that you wanted to.

When I was given credit during the California Journal Every year they had ratings and I found that being rated high in integrity meant a lot to me because I always felt that if people trusted you Disagree or whatever, if they still had confidence and feeling that you were working in the interest that you believed in, then that was very important. And I always felt colleagues that I had deep respect. I remember [Nicholas C.] Nick Petris, who was sort of my idol. But I mean, he was a liberal, a true liberal. I mean, he had such feelings for people and for those that had circumstances that they couldn't control. He was just a wonderful person, and he could get up and give the most beautiful speech and I'd would listen to him. And oftentimes I would vote differently [Laughter] but I always had such respect for him as a person. And I remember when he would compliment me, that was the greatest compliment that you could

have—when you can recognize people for who they are not so much whether you agree or disagree from where they're coming from

But I mean we represent districts that are I probably represented the most Republican and most conservative district in the state at that time and yet I never considered myself to be the most conservative I felt I was representing their interest on every issue and how it would come down would depend on what I thought was best for the people there rather than is this a Democrat or Republican issue? I started the Homeless Issues Task Force which was not a Republican issue but I mean we had calls from my office from In fact it started with a call that we got from one of the park rangers who said I've got a family down here and it's really tough I don't want to turn them over to the authorities They're living in their car but we can't have them here And we found out it was a family that had come out their job had fallen through they had no place to go there were no services available to them And I thought 'Well you know this is ridiculous The cities and the counties have no way of referring people who are down on their luck who need a place to shower a place to get themselves ready for a job interview a place to place and receive telephone calls that they want to get I mean here they were They're just completely lost They had no money they couldn't go back home again and they have two little kids and they're

living in a car. But those were things that I thought were reflective of the problems that you need to address and if you take care of people, those people are going to become contributors. They're not going to be people that are going to have their luck continually turn on them so that they become detractors of society.

And so I think that was sort of the role I envisioned that you're there as a public servant. You're not there to try to propel special interests. You're there to try to reflect what is expected of people elected to office. Maybe a little idealistic but I guess. And I always felt if you went into public service and made a lot of money [Laughter]—that I should make a lot of money—that you were there for the wrong reasons. And you never expect wealth with public service but if you feel good about what you've accomplished and that you can look back and see that some good was accomplished then it's all been worthwhile. And that's been pretty much the way I felt about it. You can find a lot of peace of mind in that.

YATES: Well, is there one thing you can identify that you really are pleased with that you were able to accomplish? You mentioned the income index bill but I was wondering if you could maybe think a minute about if there's anything else?

BERGESON: Well, I did a lot for teacher training. One of the programs was called the BTSA program, the Beginning Teacher Assessment Program, which is an

induction program for new teachers and that's one of the most successful programs that we have now for teacher training and so that's nice to hear. In fact, Governor Wilson named it after me, which was nice because I never cared for tombstoning and I always felt that that was kind of a phony way to go about your legislative activities. But anyway, that's one that I never asked for to be tombstoned but then he surprised me with it. And then another experience that I had was visiting the neonatal lab over at UCI, babies that were born prematurely without mother's having prenatal health care, so I sponsored legislation for prenatal health care and that's been very successful. There's been a lot of feedback on that and some of those programs that we started are still with the county now. They're still utilized. But you know, I

YATES: Well, I know there are all these things. I was just wondering if there was something that was really near and dear to your heart that

BERGESON: I carried so many bills. I remember some of the toughest bills were those that were probably the best but they were the most difficult. One on adoptions, because we tried to bring birth parents and adoptive parents to terms, and if you ever want to work with controversy and emotional, I mean, that was a very, very difficult one. But that brought adoption greater certainty because we. Again, this came from a group of parents that had their kids taken from them. Two years. The little boy was two

years old and the natural mother came and took the baby back. You can imagine the trauma of going through something like that, but we were able to get it. And that was a very successful bill. I've had several people call because they're still trying to use the courts in some way to use that bill in a way to advantage the adopted parents, not to the disadvantage of birth parents, but to give some certainty that there's a definite time cutoff.

YATES: What about is there anything you wish you could have accomplished that you weren't able to?

BERGESON: Well, let's see. There's no such thing as a dead bill. I mean, they keep coming back. There are more things in education. I always wanted to do more to try to help the inner city schools with getting good teachers. And I had a bill, I guess, probably one of the first bills I introduced and I kept reintroducing. It never got any place. It came about at the time that we had a lot of the segregation issues and they were doing the busing in Los Angeles and my feeling was that what we need to do is to get good teachers into those inner city schools and start building community respect and support for the schools and focus more on what they could do within their community groups where you'd have after school programs. But unfortunately teacher's unions viewed that as combat pay and so I was never able to get it out of committee. But I still think that these are ways

that Rather than move kids out into an artificial setting of which they have no identification once they leave school was the wrong way to go. And it's proven it's true. In fact, the reason that they have such a terrible deterioration of school facilities in L.A. is because of busing, because they didn't want to build new schools. They didn't want to fix up the schools because they wanted those kids moved out of Los Angeles into suburban neighborhoods. Well, that didn't work. I mean, those kids were still segregated in suburban schools, and it never really solved the problem that they were trying to accomplish, that of building greater pride and performance. And I'd look at schools in Fullerton at that time where they had a high incidence of particularly Latino population and they didn't want their kids bused because they wanted them to stay in their community. The parents wanted access to the kids. If they were sick they could come and get them. They could become more involved in their schools, and I always felt that was the solution. I still feel it's the solution but I was never able to get that.

And again, I feel I'm very pro teacher but I used to get very upset with the unions and their positions such as seniority transfer where they felt that teachers shouldn't have to teach in those tough schools once they gained seniority and were transferred out. Well, there's a message that's

being sent you know? This should be an opportunity You should look upon that as a challenge and kind of a mission to be able to affect the lives of kids that really needed to have the best kind of encouragement but weren't getting it instead of turning it off by saying we're going to put our newest or our poorest teachers in those teachings situations

YATES Right Well we've covered a lot of ground

BERGESON Yeah we have [Laughter]

YATES Is there anything that I've left out? I'm sure I have Or something that you think we should have talked about?

BERGESON Gosh I don't know It's hard We really covered a lot of ground and I think you've done a good job

YATES Thank you

BERGESON You really focused on a lot of good issues No it's helped me because a lot of this stuff you forget you know?

YATES Well you'll see the transcript and like I think I've mentioned to you you can

BERGESON Kind of clean up my language [Laughter]

YATES Well we hope you don't clean it up too much But if there's anything that comes to you after the fact we can bracket that in

BERGESON Sounds great

YATES Well thanks for all your time

BERGESON Oh Well thank you

YATES It s been fun

[End Tape 10 Side A]